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Sermon Outlines on the Cross of Christ

*Specially Designed for Pre-Easter Devotional and
Evangelistic Campaigns*

By C. C. CRAWFORD

MINISTER METROPOLITAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH
St. Louis, Missouri



"But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our
Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been
crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

—*The Apostle Paul*, in Gal. 6: 14.

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To the members of the new Metropolitan Christian Church of Saint Louis, in appreciation of their unswerving friendship and loyalty, and in the hope that what is written herein may build them up in the most holy faith and increase their devotion to Christ and the cause of New Testament Christianity, this volume is affectionately inscribed by—THE AUTHOR.

SERMON OUTLINES
ON THE
CROSS OF CHRIST

List of Abbreviations Used in This Volume

<i>art.</i> , article	<i>in loco.</i> , in this place, or connection
<i>A.V.</i> , Authorized Version of the Scriptures	<i>intro.</i> , introduction
<i>cf.</i> , compare	<i>p.</i> , page
<i>ch.</i> , chapter	<i>pp.</i> , pages
<i>chs.</i> , chapters	<i>par.</i> , paragraph
<i>edit.</i> , edition	<i>R.V.</i> , Revised Version of the Scriptures
<i>e.g.</i> , for example	<i>sect.</i> , section
<i>ff.</i> , following	<i>trans.</i> , translated
<i>fn.</i> , footnote	<i>v.</i> , verse
<i>ibid.</i> , the same	<i>vv.</i> , verses
<i>i.e.</i> , that is	<i>viz.</i> , namely
	<i>vol.</i> , volume

Acknowledgments

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THE AUTHOR.

I. *978*

Why Did Jesus Die?

Scripture Reading.—1 Cor. 15: 1-11.

Text.—"... Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures . . ." 1 Cor. 15: 3.

NOTE the *centrality* of the cross of Christ (1) in redemption, (2) in history, (3) in worship, and (4) in Christian experience.

The death of Christ was a necessary incident in the unfolding of God's eternal purpose, the climax of the whole redemptive scheme. "The Lamb that hath been slain" from "the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13: 8). "Must go . . . and suffer . . . and be killed" (Matt. 16: 21).

The death of Christ is given first place in the category of gospel facts (1 Cor. 15: 1-4; cf. 1: 22-25).

The death of Christ is commemorated in the Christian ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper (Rom. 6: 4, Col. 2: 12, Matt. 26: 27, 28, etc.). In every age since Calvary, the mystery of the Cross, the shedding of His blood, His expiatory sacrifice, all have held first place in the hearts of His disciples. The Lord's Supper, divinely ordained as a memorial of the Cross, is the central institution of all Christian worship.

The death of Jesus on the Cross, the just for the unjust, the righteous for the sinful, the innocent for the guilty, is the basis of our fellowship with the heavenly Father (Eph. 2: 11-22). He is our Mediator and High Priest, through whom we draw near to the throne of divine grace (Heb. 4: 14-16, 7: 25-27, Phil. 2: 5-11, 1 Pet. 2: 21-25, 1 John 1: 7, 2: 1).

Why did Jesus die? We cannot answer this question fully because now we see through a glass darkly. But we can set down these few simple and scriptural truths:

1. He came to be King over our souls, and His death on the Cross was the sure road to His eternal kingship.

He came not as a great military conqueror, riding in a burnished chariot, with captives chained to its wheels, and with war-panoplied legions following in precise military formation.

When He made His triumphal entry into the holy city, He rode not upon a horse, the symbol of carnal warfare, but upon "a colt, the foal of an ass," symbolic of the royalty of spirituality. Nor did He come in the capacity of statesman, philosopher or seer. He came, rather, as humanity's Servant, who sought not to be ministered unto but to minister. His kingdom is not of this world (Luke 17: 20, 21; Matt. 6: 33, 18: 1-3, 19: 14, 26: 53; John 18: 36, 37). His authority is spiritual, not carnal; and His reign is within and over the human heart (John 3: 3-5; 2 Cor. 3: 3). Nothing like it in all history: a king without a capital, an emperor without an empire, a ruler without an army, and a conqueror without a sword! How in accord with the fitness of things, then, that He should have entered upon His kingship by way of the Cross!

2. He had to die to fulfill the program of all past ages and dispensations (1 Cor. 5: 7). His death was the fulfillment of Old Testament type, symbol, metaphor and prophecy. His death was the great Antitype of all the ancient altars, passovers and offerings.

3. He had to die in order to confirm the truth of His Messiahship (Matt. 26: 64, John 18: 37) and the reliability of His own teaching (John 14: 1-6, 12: 27, 17: 4-5, 10: 17-18, 2: 19-22, 6: 40, etc.).

4. He had to die to reveal God's infinite love for man (John 3: 16, 15: 13). His death was *the* supreme sacrifice of all the ages.

5. He died *for our sins*, according to the scriptures. He shed His blood to make atonement for sin (Rom. 5: 11). (*Atonement* means *at-one-ment*, and is equivalent to *reconciliation*). He offered His body as a propitiation for our sins (Rom. 3: 25, 1 John 2: 2, 4: 10). He gave His life voluntarily, willingly, freely, for us all (John 15: 13).

"What meant his death which was at once the end and crown of his life? What meant the Cross, which thus draws to itself all the lines of his earthly life, while it throws its shadow back into the old dispensation, over all its altars and passovers? To other mortals, death is but an appendix to life, a negation, a something we could dispense with were it possible. But not so was it with Jesus. He was born that he might die; He lived that he might die; it was for this hour on Calvary that he came into the world" (Henry Burton, in *The Expositor's Bible*, vol. Luke, in loco).

Why, then, did Jesus die? The answer to this question is summed up in one big, meaningful, spiritual term—*reconciliation* (Eph. 2: 13, 2 Cor. 5: 18-20).

Conclusion: He did not die merely as a *martyr*, nor was His death merely an *example of sacrifice* for others. *He died for our sins.* By His death He sustained the majesty of the divine law which man had trampled under his feet, and paid the penalty of its violation. Had there been no sin, there would have been no death, no Calvary, no crown of thorns, no Cross.

"I saw a cross of burning gold
And jewels glorious to behold:

"Over it a golden crown,
All the people falling down.

"I saw an ugly Cross of wood,
On it there were stains of blood:

"Over it a crown of thorns,
Plaited for the people's scorn.

"Cross of gold, no fruit was thine,
Nothing but the empty shrine.

"Cross of wood, thou living tree,
The true Vine clung fast to thee."

—*Mary E. Coleridge.*

II.

The Necessity of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—1 Pet. 2: 18-25.

Text.—"Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. 2: 24.

WHY THE CROSS OF CHRIST? What necessitated its loneliness and suffering? The answer to this important question is contained in a little word of three letters—*SIN*.

Sin occasioned the Cross. *Sin* necessitated the Cross. By man came *sin*; and by *sin* came *death* (Rom. 5: 12, Jas. 1: 13-15); and by *sin* and *death*, came the Cross (Heb. 2: 14-15, 9: 24-28).

He "bare *our* sins in his body upon the tree." "All have sinned" (Rom. 3: 23). *Our* sins—yours and mine—crucified Jesus. *Our* sins—yours and mine—necessitated the Cross. "Christ died for *our* sins" (1 Cor. 15: 3). "By his stripes *ye* were healed" (1 Pet. 2: 24).

1. *The Cross therefore witnesses to the fact and certainty of sin.* The Cross testifies not only that *sin* is in the world in a general sense but also that it is in the life of every accountable human being. Christ died for *all*, because *all* have sinned. This *all* includes you and me (cf. Isa. 53: 6).

(1) *Sin is leprosy of the inner man.* "The race was contaminated in its infancy and the atmosphere of life was filled with the miasma of this awful disease. . . . The treatment for sin is a matter of revelation from God. Animals were slain and offered by divine command until Jesus came and laid down his life (John 10: 18), that the sinner might be healed and live. But even with this absolute remedy, the perfect specific, for guilt, none can be cured unless *they take the medicine*; and the kind of medicine to take, which must be such as will counteract the poison of the infection, is determined by the nature of the disease. Man contracted sin by hearing and believing and obeying a lie, preached by the devil (Gen. 3: 1-8), the father of lies (John 8: 44), himself a *living lie*; and the only hope for the sinner is to undo this monumental mistake and expel this virus out of his soul by hearing and believing and obeying the truth revealed in Jesus Christ, him-

self the *living* truth—proclaimed by his apostles, written in his testament, preached the world around by his messengers” (Adam K. Adcock, *Christian Standard*, Jan. 9, 1915).

(2) “Not only is there unrest in the continuance of sin but there is agony in the recollection of past sins. Conscience will not let him sleep even on soft pillows. There is the classic example of the French king. Against his wishes, in a weak hour, he had been persuaded to sign a decree, legalizing the murder of the Huguenots. The assassination was to take place on St. Bartholomew’s eve. It was to be signaled by the ringing of church bells. The hour came for the black murder and simultaneously the bells of Notre Dame and the other great cathedrals broke into a fury of clanging sounds. The murderers leaped to their throat-slitting and the streets of Paris ran red with blood. Well, time has its great avengings. The king is dying. Is not his couch soft? Shall he not find a pleasant passing? What says history? Half-starting from his pillow, even in the moment of death’s agony, ‘Don’t you hear them, the bells, the bells?’ and sank back on his pillow, dead. Newell Dwight Hillis, in a recent sermon, has revived an ancient tale. Two travellers are journeying on an Asian road. The one, a diamond merchant, is killed by his companion for the sake of his jewels. It was an easy thing to do—the thrust of a knife in the heart. But just as the murderer was withdrawing the knife from the falling body, two cranes flew overhead with clamant cries. Could those cranes know of the foul thing that had been done? The murderer went on to Caesarea and in soft indulgence strove to forget his sin. But one day in an open air theater, while the play was in progress, two cranes circled slowly overhead the audience and the murderer’s voice rang out above the voices of the actors, ‘The cranes, the cranes of Ibacus!’ The cranes! The bells! They will not let us sleep. They cry for the expiation of our wrong deeds. Yet other creatures in this animal world in which we live, and between whom and us, we are told, there are only differences in degree, see no cranes, hear no bells, are tortured by no visions and sounds of the days that are dead” (Geo. H. Combs, *Christian Evangelist*, Dec. 20, 1923).

2. *The Cross witnesses also to the futility of all human efforts to minimize sin or to explain it away.*

(1) “Sin and salvation are both rather old-fashioned words,” writes Dr. Winfred Ernest Garrison, “which at present are not very popular in polite intellectual society.” Again, “There are many reasons for the present-day obscurity of the sense of sin. The world at large has lost interest in the conception of original sin which has been one of the main preoccupations of theology since Augustine. Sin conceived as a damning burden of inherited guilt—not merely a congenital weakness which makes it difficult to resist the baser impulses, but such a defect that it is impossible for the natural man to do anything

pleasing to God, and such guilt that God may justly punish even a babe dying before the taint has been eradicated by the cleansing waters of baptism—this theory has not only ceased to command the approval or the serious consideration of men, but has helped to discredit the whole idea of sin. Mr. Chesterton has employed his genius for paradox by coining the statement that 'the glad news brought by the Gospel was the news of original sin.' It took from all men after Adam the personal blame for their sins; it relieved God of the responsibility for man's villainy by concentrating the blame upon the original sinner; and the church provided a sacrament by which this burden of guilt could be conveniently and almost mechanically disposed of. However badly the people of our time may behave, it is evidence of some increase in the sanity and sensitiveness of their moral judgment that they refuse to be comforted by any such gospel of original sin; but many of them have not sufficient moral sensitiveness to realize that abandoning this particular doctrine of sin does not do away with the fact of sin" (*Affirmative Religion*, pp. 105-109). Again, the modern tendency "to describe man in biological and sociological terms as the product of heredity and environment . . . has had the effect of diminishing the sense of personal accountability. Our delinquencies are misfortunes rather than faults. We are not sinners; we are victims of circumstances" (*ibid.*, p. 109). "The decreasing other-worldliness of both religion and life has likewise seemed to leave sin a rather abstract and uninteresting theological concept" (*ibid.*, p. 110). Dr. Garrison's well-stated conclusions are: (a) that "sin is not a trivial or a humorous matter. It is both real and serious. It is not to be waved away as imaginary or unimportant. It is real and serious as are the spiritual values which it threatens to destroy." Also, (b) that "salvation consists in the attainment of a desirable type of personality and satisfactory relationship with other personalities;" and (c) that the church is the group "in which the love of God is mediated through human personalities to those who need it most" (*ibid.*, p. 116, 133, 136).

(2) I heartily agree with Dr. Garrison that we have been "blaming Adam" long enough. I cannot find any ground in scripture for so-called "original sin;" in fact, the dogma is a relic of theological lingo, originating, in my opinion, in the failure of Augustine and other theologians to properly distinguish between the *guilt* and the *consequences* of sin. For instance, you might go out and in a single nighttime gamble away every thing you possess, thereby reducing your family to poverty and want. Your family would suffer the consequences of your misdeeds, but there is no court in heaven or upon earth that would hold the members of your family *guilty* because of what you may have done yourself. So the entire human race is suffering the consequences of the sins of its ancestors, and of the sin of Adam (Deut. 5: 9), chief of which is physical death (Jas. 1: 15); but there is no evidence from

observation or experience, much less from scripture, to justify the theory that any generation of mankind will be held responsible in the Judgment for the guilt of the sins of any preceding generation. On the contrary the scriptures teach expressly we are dead in *our own* trespasses and sins (Eph. 2: 1); that we are alienated from God by *our own* wicked works (Col. 1: 21); that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18: 19-22). *The only sins for which you and I will be held accountable are the sins which we ourselves commit* (Rev. 20: 13).

(3) "When I say that I believe in original sin, I do not mean that I believe in a once commonly-accepted theological dogma. We used to be taught that when Adam and Eve ate the apple, not only did sin enter the world so that every succeeding human baby was conceived and born in sin, but that you and I, now dwelling in America, in the twentieth century, are equally guilty with Adam of committing that particular sin.

In Adam's fall
We sinned all.

Such a doctrine appears to me absurd. However much I may regret Adam's unfortunate curiosity, what he did has never troubled my conscience. I don't care whether he ate an apple or a watermelon. I feel not the slightest responsibility for any one of his actions or thoughts. I have done enough myself to cause me sufficient remorse without borrowing obligations from men long dead. But although the theory that I myself committed a sin when Adam ate the apple appears to me ridiculous, it does not appear to me so absurd as the doctrine I hear frequently today from Christian pulpits, and read even oftener in nicely-printed books. The modern teaching is that there is no such thing as original sin; that men and women are not naturally bad, but naturally good; that the impelling forces in the human heart are not downward, but upward; that human nature is inherently beautiful and noble. This seems to me the last word in falsehood and folly. Of course if this reassuring and flattering theory be true, we do not need to be born again; we do not need to be converted; we need no church, no Bible and no religion; the church and the Gospels go together to the scrap-heap. Christ lived and died, not for sinners, but for people who are pretty good anyhow; the Great Physician spent his life visiting those who were healthy. . . . If it is true that human nature is naturally good, I am through with the Christian religion" (William Lyon Phelps, *Adventures and Confessions*, pp. 45-46).

(4) *Psycho-analysis* and *Psychiatry*, in their varied philosophic and applied forms and phases, are the very latest fads to claim the attention of the "gleam-chasing public." The literary markets of the world have been deluged, in the last two decades, with ponderous tomes on these two general subjects, in all of which the attempt is made to explain sin as the consequence of impulses emanating from the nerve centers

of the human body. In other words, both sin and crime are to be explained and treated from the purely *physiological* point of view. The pioneers in this particular field were of course Freud, Jung, and Adler. *Behaviorism*, so-called, which is but one of the phases of Psycho-analysis, has been defined as that philosophy in which man's activities are described without the employment of any such metaphysical terms as "consciousness," "will," "imagery," "perception" or "sensation." "For the strict behaviorist," writes Maynard Shipley (*The Thinker*, June, 1931), "‘thinking’ is itself merely a kind of behavior, a form of muscular activity, the kind used in talking, but concealed." Again, "Even the mild behaviorist concedes that neither ‘mind’ nor ‘consciousness’ (equivalent terms) is an entity—something apart from neurones." Still again, "To be a behaviorist, one may accept it as established that mental operations are in a sense psychical, but are nevertheless strictly anatomical and physiological phenomena, involving consciousness, and that man possesses no supersensual attribute called ‘mind’—a ghostly something existing in relation to, or interacting with, the brain. One may—and usually does—accept it as a valid conclusion that there is no such place or condition known to man as a spiritual world or domain, in contrast with, or in addition to, the material world around us; that the so-called ‘soul’ is purely a man-made verbal invention; and that ‘the spiritual life of man’ is merely the cultural life of civilized human beings, involving what is conveniently designated as ‘idealism,’ ethical ideals, appreciation of beauty, and so on. To accept these statements as valid makes of one a behaviorist." All of which, shorn of its psychological nomenclature, means that *mind* and *brain* are identical; and this in turn is sheer materialism, as old as the human race itself.

(5) The vicious tendency of this cult is strikingly illustrated in the following excerpts, culled from a recent volume written by one of its enthusiastic devotees: "Passion radiantly humanized by compassion is our enriching new ideal." "The quintessence of the sexual revolution lies in woman's delighted acceptance of the love relation as recreation." "Is there any form of sex behavior that may be called abnormal in the pathologic sense, and if so, from what point of view?" "Sex as duty has gone the way of all wearisome and life-denying superstitions. Sex as delight has captured the minds of men and women eager for felicity." "The vital essence of the quite new morality is its reputable shamelessness." "Marriage used to mean living together until death do us part. Marriage now means living apart until death do bring us together. Marriage no longer binds. Marriage no longer unites." "The ritual of fear has embodied itself in such noble and soul-destroying conceptions as God, Fate, Death, Immortality, Evil, Confessional, Prayer, Magic . . . Man's mind is haunted by spooks." "The prejudice of an individual is provincialism; the prejudice of a nation is patriotism." "Man cannot yet make his peace with the fact that the woman he has chosen to honor in marriage

assumes the right to dishonor him at her sweet will and to call this humiliation of his ego, the independence of woman." "This so-called civilization, which is a pig-sty made somewhat habitable by an inordinate use of perfume, lives by callousness and cruelty." "History is still a crazy quilt of myth, magic, intuition, inspiration, prejudice, preconception, rationalization, complicated make-believe." "Life itself is bankrupt." "The church is a sacred barracks where little tin gods, the mercenaries of the Christly life, are brought into a state of hypnosis which makes possible and pleasant a quite subconscious training in stultification. The grandiose result is a cult of stupidity that no amount of intellectual dynamite can ever bring disaster to. Sanctified stupidity. Big Business is a training school (mostly night courses when conscience is a little sleepy) in habits of duplicity, the shining objective being legalized fraud. Journalism is a flourishing enterprise that lives by falsification and profitable concealment, whose honorable aim is to lift lying to the plane of a fine art. And Society, that gracious hypocrite, contributes to our psychological insight in ways too numerous to mention. Society is a post-graduate course in cunning. Society teaches us how to rationalize our contradictions so that we may securely proceed with the spiritual business of climbing into positions of power, profit, and prestige on the acquiescent backs of our fellow-men." "Our faith in civilization is at ebb tide. How shall we rebuild in man the music and the dream?" What is the author's remedy? "Psychiatry to the rescue!" (Samuel D. Schmalhausen, *Why We Misbehave*, pp. 17, 18, 29, 31, 32, 40, 48, 62, 67, 73, 98-99, 103-104). For sheer materialism and hopeless cynicism, this volume undoubtedly takes the prize!

(6) In a recent issue of the *Survey*, an article appeared under the caption, "Vengeance or Vision," written by Prof. Karl A. Menninger, head of the Department of Criminology in Washburn College, Topeka, Kansas. In this essay the author deals with the question of moral delinquency from the standpoint of the present-day psychiatrist. He treats all sin as disease and concludes that the idea of responsibility is meaningless. To the psychiatrist, there are really no criminal and no insane, he states. It is just as absurd to talk of an action being criminal as it would be to talk about pneumonia or a broken arm being just or unjust. All actions are governed by fixed forces and moral responsibility is absurd. Commenting on the article, Dr. F. D. Kershner, Dean of the School of Religion, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, says: "There can be no question about the fact that men are not as fully responsible for their misdeeds as the older theories believed. A great deal of the crime and vice which afflict the world would be removed under proper social conditions. Nevertheless, it seems quite impossible to reduce all evil to purely involuntary processes. There is such a thing as a man being sick, and such a thing as his being a scoundrel, and the two things are not synonymous. A man may steal because he is diseased in body or mind, but there are some thieves who cannot justly claim

such an alibi. The idea of punishment has been overworked a good deal in the past, and needs revision. This does not mean that it should be revised out of existence. Humanity suffers inevitable degradation when it loses the high note of responsibility. On the basis of Professor Menninger's theory, conscience and remorse have no intelligible meaning. All this may be accepted by psychiatrists, but the ordinary preacher knows better. Sin and remorse are realities in everyday experience, whatever they may be in the laboratory records of the scientist" (Dr. F. D. Kershner, *Christian Evangelist*, April, 1926).

(7) These numerous "scientific" doctors and "psycho-analytic" pathologists, with their quack remedies, call to my mind the lines by Browning:

"'You are sick, that's sure'—they say:
 'Sick of what?'—they disagree.
 "'Tis the brain'—thinks Dr. A;
 "'Tis the heart'—holds Dr. B;
 'The liver—my life I'd lay!
 'The lungs!' 'The lights!'
 Ah me!

"So ignorant of man's whole,
 Of bodily organs plain to see—
 So sage and certain, frank and free,
 About what's under lock and key—
 Man's soul!"

3. *The Cross, with its supreme example of self-sacrifice, teaches us that the essential principle of sin is selfishness.*

(1) *What is the essential principle of sin?* (a) Some would reply, *Sensuality*; that sin is the inevitable product of man's fleshly nature, of the spirit's connection with a physical organism. But man is a moral being, and under no obligation to yield to his bodily impulses. If he does yield, it is because he *decides* to yield. (b) Others would say, *Finiteness*; that sin is the inevitable consequence of man's imperfect state, necessary in fact to his experimental training and development. This has been called "the green apple theory," viz., that sin is a green apple which needs only time and sunshine and warmth to bring out its usefulness. To this I reply that sin is more than a green apple—it is a green apple with a worm inside gnawing at its core. And that worm can never be eliminated by any process of growth; it must be *cut out*.

(c) Others would say, *Contrast*; that life is a composite of contrasts, in which evil is necessary to counterbalance the good. But this explanation doesn't explain anything. (d) Most of the ancient philosophers solved the problem, so far as they were concerned, by denying the fact of sin altogether, as do the modern disciples of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy; or else by

resolving it into a principle of eternal necessity. (c) It seems quite obvious to me that the essential principle of sin is *Selfishness*. As such it is closely related to the *will*, from which in fact it cannot be disassociated. There never was a sin committed that was not the choice of self in preference to God. Every appeal that Satan made to the Savior, on the mount of temptation, was an appeal to self: first, to self-satisfaction, or to satisfy His physical self which hungered; second, to self-pride, or a suggestion that He appear in a miraculous demonstration, rather than by way of the Cross; and the third, an appeal to self-aggrandizement, offering Him all the kingdoms of this world if He would but fall down and worship the Tempter. It is significant that the only weapon which the Master used to defeat these subtle suggestions was the *word* of God, the revelation of God's *will*. His reply, in every case, was, "*It is written*," etc. (Matt. 4: 1-11). Sin is the choice of *self* above *God*.

(2) It has been rightly said that "freedom of choice is a postulate of the moral life." Whatever power of choice man has is determined by his own nature as it has been organized under the influences of heredity, environment, and, last but not least, *idealism*. Every normal being has the power of self-conscious reflection and choice. So long as this power to choose remains, the spiritual self is alive. When by continued practice of evil the power of self-determination is weakened and ultimately lost, man has committed spiritual suicide, and for him there is nothing left but hell. Hell, however, was not prepared for man, but for "the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25: 41). Hell is the penitentiary of the moral universe. If man goes to hell it will be because, as Chrysostom was wont to say, he casts himself into it. Christianity provides the Ideal, the incentive, the magnet sufficient to lure him onward and upward to the City of God (John 3: 14; 8: 28; 12: 32).

"To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and a Way;
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And in between on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A High Way and a Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go."

—John Oxenham.

(3) "There is another thing the Scriptures point out most plainly, and that is: Sin is first a matter of motive, of intent, of desire, of purpose. To wish to murder a man is murder, and to lust is adultery. Here is the vast difference between sin and crime. Crime takes account only of the committed deed, of the completed action. Sin may be hidden; crime is overt. A declaration that might be made in passing is that

sin is a transgression of the *divine* law. A thing may be a sin that is not a crime, but it is almost impossible to think of a crime that hasn't back of it some sin" (Geo. W. Knepper, *Christian Standard*, Nov. 3, 1928). "Sin," says John, "is lawlessness" (1 John 3: 4). This definition is quite comprehensive, and includes the sins both of commission and of omission (Jas. 4: 17).

(4) "We do not affirm, nor do we believe, that any one is guilty previous to the exercise of personal choice. A guilty infant is a contradiction in terms. We do not believe that any individual act of sin is forced by circumstances or heredity upon a reluctant will. We do not doubt that it is in the power of every will to make the grand choice, habitually and predominantly, of good against evil" (Mackintosh, *Christianity and Sin*, p. 166). Sin, therefore, originates in *selfishness*, and is the choice of *self* and *self's way*, above *God* and *God's way*.

"Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;
Each vict'ry will help you,
Some other to win;
Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus,
He'll carry you through."
—H. R. Palmer.

4. Finally, the Cross witnesses to the truth that *God's one and only remedy for sin is the blood of Jesus Christ* (1 John 1: 7), "Under the gospel we have one, and only one, great and all-meritorious ground of justification. That ground is the atoning blood of Christ" (Lard, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 124). This justification, on the ground of Christ's atoning blood, is appropriated on man's part by *faith* (Rom. 5: 1, Eph. 2: 8). The blood of Christ is the *remedy*; the gospel is the means of *presentation*; and the hearing and obedience of faith, the method of *application* (Rom. 1: 16, 1 Cor. 1: 21, Gal. 3: 2, Jas. 2: 14-26). (See outline number 23, "Sin and its Cure.")

Conclusion: Sin exists—to deny it is to deny the reality and efficacy of the Cross. Sin exists to be overcome—to deny this is to belittle God's entire plan of redemption. Moreover, God expects us to overcome sin.

"Each sin has a door of entrance,
Keep—that—door—closed!
Bar it tight;
Just outside the wild beast crouches

In the night.
Pin the bolt with a prayer!
God will fix it there."

—John Oxenham.

God, however, *does not expect us to conquer sin in our own strength alone*. That would be expecting the impossible of us! *Therefore He has provided a remedy for sin!* "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). We can do all things through Christ who "strengtheneth" us (Phil. 4: 13).

Sin necessitated the Cross; and sin necessitates the preaching of the Cross. "For *necessity* is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16).

"There is darkness still, gross darkness, Lord,
On this fair earth of Thine;
There are prisoners still in the prison house,
Where never a light doth shine.
There are doors still bolted against Thee,
There are faces set like a wall;
And over them all the Shadow of Death
Hangs like a pall.

"Do you hear the voices calling
Out there in the black of night?
Do you hear the sobs of the women,
Who are barred from the blessed light?
And the children—the little children—
Do you hear their pitiful cry?
O brothers, we must seek them,
Or there in the dark they die!"

—John Oxenham.

III.

From Gethsemane to Calvary

Scripture Reading.—Matt. 26: 47-68, 27: 11-26.

Text.—"He saved others; himself he cannot save." Matt. 27: 42.

WE ARE NOW READY to travel with Jesus the historic "way of sorrows"—the way that led from Gethsemane's gate to the palace of the High Priest, thence to Pilate's Judgment Hall, and finally to "the place of a skull," where the tragedy of the ages was enacted, and where human cruelty reached its highest tide. The salient incidents in the course of events leading up to the Cross may be summarized as follows:

1. *The arrest* (Matt. 26: 47-56, Mark 14: 43-52, Luke 22: 47-53, John 18: 2-12), which took place near the gate of Gethsemane soon after the midnight hour.

(1) East of Jerusalem the ground slopes downward to the brook Kidron on the opposite side of which rises the Mount of Olives. The side of this hill facing the city had been laid out in gardens (or orchards) belonging to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Gethsemane was one of these. The agony in the garden was just over when "Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders." It seems that the two groups, Jesus and His little band of associates, and the hastily gathered posse which sought His arrest, met somewhere just outside the garden.

(2) The mob had no doubt come down from the east gate of the city across the brook Kidron. "It was a full moon and the black mass was easily visible, moving along the dusty road" (Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 2). No doubt the Temple police were at the front because it was at the injunction of their masters that the arrest was to be made. There is no evidence of any Roman soldiers having accompanied them. In all probability some of the dignified members of the Sanhedrin were along to make doubly sure that none of their plans miscarried. This composite rabble was armed with swords and staves, and carried torches and lanterns, in anticipation of a search for Jesus and His disciples in the recesses of their retreat and of possible resistance at the moment of arrest.

(3) Judas was the leader of the mob. The circumstances of his collusion with the ecclesiastical heads of Israel to betray the Master for thirty pieces of silver are too well known to be reiterated here. By pre-arrangement a kiss, usually the sign

of friendship or discipleship, was to be the sign by which Jesus was to be identified to those seeking His arrest. This kiss of betrayal was "the crowning profanation" for which humanity will never forgive the traitor. Not only did he step forward to greet the Master as soon as he saw Him, but it seems that he fairly flung himself upon His neck and, as the original word indicates, kissed Him fervently and repeatedly. Cut to the quick by this treachery Jesus could not keep back the devastating question, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (cf. Ps. 55: 12-14). "The spitting, the buffeting, the blows of the Jewish rabble and of the Roman soldiers, and the sponge dipped in vinegar, were to be less intolerable than that kiss, the kiss of a mouth which had called Him Friend and Master, which had drunk from His cup, which had eaten from His dish" (Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 311). But it was the only way. "Incarnate God could be betrayed only by Incarnate Devil" (P. Whitwell Wilson, *The Christ We Forget*, p. 274).

"I used to hate the man
Each time I thought of this:
How he could calmly plot and plan;
Betray love with a kiss.

"But one day as I stood
Where men count silver, gold,
I heard them barter for His blood
Just as men did of old.

"Bright coins were counted out,
I had my part of this;—
Then fled . . . His words were as a knout . . .
'Betrayest me with a kiss?'

"And now I know how one
Can give Love up to die . . .
Hate is a hunger never done
Until it crucify."

—John Richard Moreland, in
The Churchman, New York.

(4) The posse expected of course that Jesus would try to escape. When instead He stepped forward into the moonlight where all could see Him and see the prearranged sign of identification given by Judas, the boldest started towards Him to make the arrest. "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he." This was astounding. The truth is they had expected to creep up on Him unawares and take Him prisoner by stealth, but when He came forth to meet them boldly and calmly announced His identity, they became confused. He made them feel the ridiculousness of their preparations—their swords and staves, lanterns and torches, as if

they were in search of a desperado. There was something so extraordinarily majestic and subduing in His attitude that "the curs fell backward, either at the sound of His tranquil voice or at the light of those divine eyes" (Papini, *ibid*). But He was considering only the welfare of His disciples—He knew full well what was ahead of *Him*. "I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." At this moment Simon Peter suddenly recovered from his panic, and, taking advantage of the momentary confusion of the guards, seized his sword, drew it and at the first stroke cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. But his untimely action was at once repudiated by Jesus who rebuked him sternly: "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled?" "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Having reprimanded Peter, He touched the ear of the stricken Malchus and made it whole. Poor Peter! There was real nobility in what he did—but he just didn't understand!

(5) The disciples, now thoroughly frightened by Peter's impetuous action, fled, scattering in every direction under the cover of darkness. The guards seized Jesus and bound Him. During the confusion a young man who seems to have been sleeping naked in a grove of olives nearby, had been awakened, and, wrapping a winding-sheet around his body, had stepped out to see what was going on. The guards happened to see him standing there and started to apprehend him, thinking him to be one of the disciples. But the young man fled precipitately, leaving the winding-sheet in the hands of his would-be captors. As Mark is the only writer who has preserved this interesting story, it has been generally supposed that the young man was John Mark himself. After this incident the officers, attended by the rabble, conducted their prisoner over the brook Kidron, through the city gates, and along the silent streets to the palace of the high priest. The first act of the tragedy was over.

2. *The ecclesiastical trial.*

(1) It should be explained here that Jesus had to undergo two trials: the first ecclesiastical, the second civil; the first before Caiaphas, the high priest; and the second before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. The Jews as a nation were a province of the Roman Empire and therefore subject to Rome's final authority. It was Rome's policy to leave in the hands of her conquered subjects a semblance at least of self-government. But Rome insisted that the infliction of the death penalty should be her own prerogative. Hence in this case the Sanhedrin could pass the sentence of capital punishment, but that necessitated another trial before the properly constituted Roman authorities, in this case Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Moreover the execution of the sentence

devolved upon him by virtue of his position. This was a constant source of irritation to the Jews who were at all times in a state of rebellion underneath the surface, and they seized every opportunity such as this case offered to embarrass the hated Roman.

(2) Not only were there two trials in this celebrated case, but in each trial there were three distinct stages. In the ecclesiastical trial, Jesus was taken before Annas *first* (John 18: 13, 14, 19-23). Annas, an old man of seventy years skilled in political trickery, had been high priest some twenty years before but had been deposed under Tiberius. He was still the virtual head of the Jewish theocracy, however, although his son-in-law, Caiaphas, was the nominal head. It is quite evident that this wily old Sadducee had taken a prominent part in the arrangements made with Judas, and had not even retired knowing quite well what was going on. Nor was he in the least surprised when the Prisoner was marched into his presence. Annas first asked the Master the names of His disciples. But Jesus merely looked at him without replying. Annas then asked Him about His teaching. Jesus replied that it was not for Him to explain His doctrine, that He had always spoken openly and had done nothing in secret. "Why askest thou me? Ask them that heard me." In other words, if Annas had any charges to prefer or witnesses to be heard, let them be produced in a legal manner. At this point an officer standing near by, probably for the sake of making an impression upon his superior, struck the Master with the palm of his hand, saying: "Answerest thou the high priest so?" But Jesus merely turned to the attendant and said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" By this time Annas was beginning to see that this was no ordinary prisoner, and no doubt this realization made him the more determined to put Him out of the way forever.

(3) It seems that the period required for this informal investigation before Annas provided sufficient time for messengers to be sent out hurriedly in every direction to summon the members of the Great Sanhedrin into extraordinary session. So, after a sufficient interval, Annas sent the Prisoner to Caiaphas. The *second* stage of the ecclesiastical trial followed: the trial and condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrin in the house of Caiaphas, the high priest himself acting as presiding officer of the tribunal (Matt. 26: 57-68, Mark 14: 53-65, Luke 22: 54, 63-65, John 18: 24). "This man, the blind tool of his father-in-law had of course to ratify everything. The Sanhedrin was assembled at his house. The inquiry began: several witnesses, well instructed beforehand, according to the inquisitorial processes described in the Talmud, appeared before the tribunal. The fatal sentence which Jesus had really uttered, 'I am able to destroy the Temple of God and build it in three days,' was cited by two witnesses. To blaspheme the Temple of God was, according to the Jewish law, equivalent to blas-

pheming God Himself. Jesus kept silence, and refused to explain the asserted speech" (Renan, *Life of Jesus, in loco*). He knew quite well the sentence had been determined in advance and that all this was mere pretext; hence made no attempt to undertake a useless defense. But there came a time when it was necessary for Him to speak, or else deny His mission. This was when Caiaphas asked Him pointblank, "Art thou the Christ?" (Mark 14: 61). This question had to be answered. The issue was clear-cut now and could not be avoided. The Prisoner replied unequivocally and without hesitation, "I am." This was sufficient for the high priest's purpose. "He rent his clothes," according to the Marcan narrative, conceded to be the most ancient of the gospel records, "and saith, What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?" "And they all condemned him to be worthy of death" (Mark 14: 61-64).

(4) The *third* and final stage in the ecclesiastical trial was evidently the hurried reconconvocation of the Sanhedrin in formal session in the house of Caiaphas immediately after dawn (Mark 15: 1, Matt. 27: 1, Luke 22: 66-71). This session was necessary to meet the requirements of the Jewish law which forbade the imposition of the death penalty under cover of darkness. In the interim "while the high officials went apart to take counsel on the manner of securing the ratification from the Procurator and executing the death sentence with all speed, Jesus was thrown as prey to the rabble in the Palace, as the offal of the slain animal is thrown to the pack which has taken part in the hunt . . . The captors of Christ, waiting for foreign authority to confirm the death sentence of the most innocent of their brothers, meant to give Christ a humorous foretaste of His sufferings. They had permission to jest with their King, to divert themselves with their God" (Papini, *ibid*). "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the officers received him with blows of their hands" (Mark 14: 65). Think of all this happening in connection with a meeting of what was supposed to be the most ancient and most spiritual ecclesiastical assembly of its day! All of which goes to show that religious bigotry is the most cruel type of intolerance known to man! Religious hate of such intensity has ever proved itself to be "a hunger never done until it crucify." "And then—a horrible thing that we hate to tell. The court became a bear garden. They flung the Prisoner about as only an Eastern mob could do. . . . Caiaphas and the council saw it and held their peace. Probably Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus saw it—and could do nothing. And I think Judas Iscariot saw it and went mad." (J. Paterson-Smyth, *A People's Life of Christ*, p. 447). When dawn came, however, the horse-play came to an end, and the death penalty was officially ratified, after which Caiaphas and his underlings hurried their Prisoner into the presence of Pontius Pilate that the death penalty might be properly confirmed and executed.

(5) Here the Jewish accusers of Jesus again demonstrated their vindictiveness. Their law provided that the death penalty should be inflicted by stoning (Deut. 13: 7-12, 17: 2-7). Dr. Joseph Klausner, eminent modern Jewish authority, writes: "The Law enacted that the blasphemer, the false prophet, the beguiler and seducer were to be stoned. It was also held that 'everyone that is stoned is also hanged,' and all alike held that the blasphemer who had been stoned was (after death by stoning) also hanged. The *Mishna* goes into detail: 'How do they hang him? They fix a beam in the ground and a piece of wood branches from it . . . and the two hands are fastened together, and so they hang him'" (*Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. by Danby, pp. 344-345). But the penalty usually inflicted by the Romans was death by *crucifixion*, a cruel and horrible end. These shrewd ecclesiastics no doubt saw that here was an opportunity to make Roman authority and procedure, which they so heartily despised, serve their own vindictive purpose, which was to make this Prisoner suffer the most heartless and ignominious form of death known to man—death on a cross! Once condemned to die by a Roman court, the inevitable end for this Pretender would be crucifixion! And they proceed to bring to bear every influence and to bend every circumstance to hasten this desired end!

3. *The civil trial.*

The three stages in the civil trial were:

(1) *The initial hearing before Pilate* (Matt. 27: 2, 11-14; Mark 15: 2-5; Luke 23: 1-5; John 18: 28-38). When the Prisoner was brought before Pilate, His accusers asked that the death sentence be enforced on the bare statement they had found Him to be a blasphemer. The impudence of the request nettled the Roman governor, who replied sarcastically, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law;" in other words, "If you have taken the matter into your own hands, go ahead and impose the penalty without my approval." This forced the humiliating confession that the imposition of the death sentence was out of their jurisdiction (John 18: 31). Said Pilate, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" They replied by bringing forward certain charges of a political nature which they calculated would be most effective in moving the governor, viz., that Jesus forbade the payment of taxes to Rome and had proclaimed Himself a king. Pilate was shrewd enough not to be deceived by this sophistry. He knew those Jews well enough to be sure they would never have asked the death of one of their countrymen for such offenses as these. So Pilate took the Prisoner inside the palace and questioned Him privately. In the course of this hearing Pilate asked, "Art thou a king?" And Jesus witnessed the good confession a second time by replying, "Thou sayest;" qualifying His reply with the explanation that His kingdom was "not of this world." This private interrogation served to convince the governor that the charges against this man were

false. He accordingly came out before His accusers and dismissed their complaint with the frank statement. "I find no crime in him." But they "were the more fierce," and began to pour out additional accusations. "He stirreth up the people," they cried, "teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place." "Galilee!" exclaimed Pilate, "is this man a Galilean?" What good fortune!—thought the Roman. This Prisoner was by all rights a subject of Herod Antipas, and Herod was at that very moment in the city attending the Passover celebration. Besides, Herod was more familiar with Jewish traditions and prejudices than he, a Roman. Herod would know how to handle the case, and he would rid himself of it forever! So Pilate ordered the Prisoner conducted across the city to Herod.

(2) *The hearing before Herod Antipas*, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (Luke 23: 6-12). Herod at first tried to satisfy his own curiosity by asking irrelevant questions to which Jesus did not even deign to reply. Herod then called upon Him to perform a miracle, not knowing of course in his blindness that the Master would not under any circumstance perform a miracle to benefit Himself! Jesus continued to maintain a strict silence. Herod must have finally concluded in his own swinish way that this Prisoner *could not* perform a miracle, as His disciples had claimed, even if He wanted to, and that His Messianic pretensions were exploded now that He was in the hands of the civil authorities! So Herod began to make sport of Him. He cast over his shoulders a gorgeous robe, as if to suggest that the Prisoner might be a candidate for the kingship; and, amid raucous peals of laughter, ordered Him conducted out of his presence and back to Pilate, the only result of the incident having been the healing of a personal breach which had hitherto existed between Herod and the Roman. "Herod stood before Jesus, without shame, without any stirring of moral delicacy, and put to Jesus some idle and curious questions. But Jesus answered him nothing. Jesus found He had nothing He wished to say to Herod. . . . Jesus came into the world, not to answer men's idle questions, but to deliver them from bad habits and temper of mind. He came into the world to do us good; and it is only as our lives become purer under His control, that the real questions about life come to be answered. Christianity abides in the world, not to indulge the curiosity of the human mind, but to answer some lonely and utter cry. Finally, the silence of Jesus towards Herod is an extreme and dramatic warning to us all not to trifle with serious things, not to suppress, or distort, or delay, the private appeals and suggestions from the Holy Spirit, which come, as they already have come, to us all in various ways" (John A. Hutton, *There They Crucified Him*, pp. 108-109).

(3) *The third and final hearing before Pilate*, at the imperial palace (Matt. 27: 15-26, Mark 15: 6-15, Luke 23: 13-25, John 18: 39 to 19: 16). Perhaps I should explain here that it is im-

possible, because of the fragmentary and disconnected nature of the gospel records, to determine with any degree of certainty the exact sequence of those events which are connected with this final hearing and its tragic conclusion. All we can do is to arrange the different incidents mentioned by the four narrators in what would appear to be, approximately of course, the most logical order of their occurrence. It seems that in the interim of the hearing before Herod Antipas, Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, had interceded in the Prisoner's behalf, sending a message to her husband, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with this righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." So when Pilate found the Prisoner before him a second time that morning, with this warning ringing in his ears, he subjected Jesus to another private examination, with the result that he was all the more convinced that this was an innocent man and all the more determined to save Him if possible. Following this interrogation Pilate went out before the Sanhedrinists a second time and told them bluntly that he had found no fault in the accused with respect to the charges they had brought against Him, particularly nothing that justified the death penalty. "Therefore," he added, "I will chastise him and let him go." Ah, Pilate, what a tragedy! Here was the entering wedge, the beginning of Pilate's downfall! Had he cut those fellows off with the same iron declaration that he made later, "What I have written I have written," history would have been written in different—yet less noble and certainly less promising—terms. But in offering to chastise an innocent man Pilate played into the hands of His enemies. Those devilishly cunning priests saw at a glance that if they could bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the governor to induce him to order an innocent man chastised, they could, if persistent and unyielding, force him to ratify the much-desired death penalty. Pilate cut loose from principle when he pronounced Jesus innocent yet in the same breath offered to chastise Him. *Pilate's sin was compromise!* The hands of his wife, and the promptings of his own heart, had been stretched out to hold him back from the brink of disaster, but this impulse towards compromise carried him over the precipice into the whirlpool of vacillation and ultimate surrender. Prior to that moment, it had been "Christ before Pilate;" but from that moment to this, it has been Pilate before Christ.

(4) It seems that by this time the rabble had begun to pour through the palace gates in anticipation of their annual "peace" offering, it having been the custom of the Roman authorities to release unto them a prisoner on each Passover morning. On this occasion the candidate for freedom was a "notable prisoner" by the name of Barabbas, half-robber, half-insurrectionary leader, probably a Zealot who had been captured in one of the unsuccessful revolts so common in that day, a fellow who had fired the popular imagination. It is strange that such an astute politician as Pilate must have been to have

held the position which he occupied—one of the most difficult in the entire Roman Empire—should have been so unfamiliar with mob psychology as to have attempted to rescue Jesus under such circumstances by an appeal to public sentiment! Yet he no doubt acted honestly, thinking he saw here another chance to save his Prisoner. So he appealed to the rabble. "Which of the two will ye that I release unto you: Barabbas, or this Jesus who is called Christ?" And the reply was hurled back from ten thousand throats: "Barabbas! Release unto us Barabbas!" Alas, Pilate had reckoned without those cunning hirelings of the high priest who in anticipation of just such an appeal had been circulating among the people spreading their malicious propaganda! This man Barabbas, they urged, is a patriot, a martyr who has been persecuted by these cursed foreigners; but this Jesus—who is He? Just an impostor who has prated about setting aside the Law of Moses and destroying our holy Temple, who hasn't sufficient courage nor power to perform a miracle in His own defense! It was enough. The mob responded to this priestly hypocrisy and became willing dupes of ecclesiastical hate, as always. "Release unto us Barabbas!" Pilate, staggered for the moment by this unexpected reply, finally asked: "What then shall I do with Jesus?" Probably he expected them to say, Give us Jesus, too! Instead there arose, quick as echo, the hoarse, inhuman cry of the pack thirsting for the blood of its victim, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" If any one should doubt the justness of humanity's verdict in placing upon the Jewish nation the responsibility for the tragedy that followed, culminating on Golgotha, certainly this fiendish cry, "Crucify him!" should forever dispel any such misgivings! For, let it be remembered that it was the Jewish people who made the decision, and not Pilate nor the Roman authorities! As Renan has written: "It was, then, neither Tiberius nor Pilate who condemned Jesus: it was the old Jewish party; it was the Mosaic Law. According to our modern ideas, there is no inheritance of guilt from father to son: each must account to human or divine justice only for that which he himself has done. Every Jew who suffers today for the murder of Jesus has therefore a right to complain; for he might have been a Simon the Cyrenian, or at least not have been one of those who cried, 'Crucify him!' But nations, like individuals, have their responsibility. If ever a crime was the crime of a nation, it was surely the crucifying of Jesus" (*Life of Jesus*, p. 383).

(5) Pilate, still hoping to devise a means of saving this man and at the same time pacifying the Jews, turned Him over to the executioners for the scourging that always preceded a crucifixion. It was probably his thought that flagellation would satisfy the mob's thirst for vengeance; it would appear therefore that the scourging took place where all could see it. Pilate himself, in all likelihood, retired into the palace while it was being inflicted. "The victim was stripped and stretched against a pillar, or bent over a low post, his hands being

tied so that he had no means of defending himself. The instrument of torture was a sort of knout, or cat-o'-nine-tails, with bits of iron or bone attached to the ends of the thongs. Not only did the blows cut the skin and draw blood, but not infrequently the victim died in the midst of the operation" (Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, pp. 90-91). After the scourging the soldiers took the Victim with them to their own quarters in the palace and called together the entire band for the purpose of making sport of Him as Herod had done. These Romans had no more love for the Jews than the Jews for them, and this feeling no doubt sharpened their scorn of this Messianic pretender. Gloating over His suffering and turning His shame into mockery, they acted like a gang of schoolboys. They treated Him as if they believed Him to be a king. Of course a king must wear the *purple*: so they found somewhere an officer's cast-off cloak of this color and put it on Him. A king must have a *crown*: so one of them ran out into the park in which the palace stood and pulled a few branches from a tree or bush. It was a thorn tree, but that didn't matter; they plaited it into a rude semblance of a crown and crushed it down, thorns and all, on His head. A king must have a *scepter*, too: so they found a reed, probably one that had been used as a walking stick, and forced it into His hand. Now He was equipped and appareled as royalty! Then one by one they filed past Him, and bending low as before a monarch, said mockingly, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And each, after giving this taunting salutation, would face about and smite Him in the face. Finally, incredible as it may seem, they covered His face with spittle! All of which goes to prove that there is no cruelty like the cruelty of underlings! Those soldiers turned what should have been a serious business into "a Roman holiday" of horseplay and jest. "Laughter guided them in their inhuman acts; it concealed from them the true nature of what they were doing; and it wounded Christ more deeply than the scourge of Pilate" (Stalker, *ibid.*, p. 96). "Thus robed, Herod sent Him back to Pilate, whose soldiers platted a crown, not of gold, as of wealth; nor of iron, as of force; but of thorns—the common thorn that torments all mankind; and they set it on His brow. There shone forth the glory of suffering as He bore it, and as we may bear it if we suffer with Him. They struck Him with a reed, as authority strikes Him today, yet they also put a reed in His hand. He did not seize it; He did not refuse it; and thus they foretold the end of things when all power will return to Him. They bowed the knee, as every knee will bow, and cried, as every voice will yet cry, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Thus He was crowned, robed, sceptered—the Divine right of kingship conferred irrevocably on Him alone. Was ever ceremony, unrehearsed, so full of significance?" (P. Whitwell Wilson, *The Christ We Forget*, p. 286). Having dealt with Him thus, they brought Him back to Pilate, arrayed in purple, crowned with thorns, and bleeding from His wounds.

(6) Pilate then tried to appeal to the pity of the mob. He

brought the Prisoner out on the portico where all could see Him, purple-robed, thorn-crowned and bleeding; and cried, "Behold, the man!" As if to ask: What more do you want? Isn't this enough? Isn't this sufficient to satisfy your hate? But the cry went up to heaven again, sounded by the chief priests and scribes: "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (John 19: 1-5). Their unyieldingness roused Pilate's obstinacy. Taking his original stand, with a sneer at their helplessness, he said: "Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him" (John 19: 6). The rulers answered this challenge promptly by abandoning the political charges they had brought against the Prisoner and revealing the religious charge: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19: 7). This expression, "Son of God," seems to have aroused a superstitious fear in the Roman. He took the Master into the Praetorium a third time and questioned Him privately. "Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar" (John 19: 8-12). This grim threat of the chief priests that they would openly denounce the governor to Tiberius if he released the Prisoner was their final and most potent weapon. Pilate then made his last appeal—or was it sarcasm? "Behold your King! Shall I crucify your King?" And the hypocrites shouted: "We have no king but Caesar!" The governor now realized that he must yield, or face the alternative of a bloody riot and possible expulsion from office. There was nothing left but the final gesture, an act intended to be impressive at the time, but which to people of subsequent ages has been wholly theatrical. Calling for a basin of water he washed his hands before the multitude, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it!" "And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children!" (Matt. 27: 24-25). Pilate then released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus up to be crucified. And the curtain dropped on the second act of the tragedy!

(7) The most concise summary of the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus I have ever been able to find is the following: "When morning was come, the Sanhedrin was convened and He was condemned to death on the charge of blasphemy (Mark 15: 1, Luke 22: 66-71), and then was led in bonds to the Roman governor for execution, since the Romans had taken from the Sanhedrin the authority to execute a death sentence (John 18: 31). Before Pilate, the Jews had to name an offense recognized by Roman law; His accusers therefore falsified His claim and made Him out a political Messiah, hostile to Roman rule (Luke 23: 1-2). Pilate soon saw that the charge was trumped up, and sought in every way while keeping the good-will of the people, to escape the responsibility of giving sentence against Jesus. His first effort was a simple declaration that he found no fault in the Prisoner (Luke 23: 4); then, having heard that He was a Galilean, he

tried to transfer the case to Herod, who happened to be in the city at the time (Luke 23: 5-12); he then sought to compromise by agreement to chastise Jesus and then release Him (Luke 23: 13-16); next he offered the people their choice between the innocent Jesus, and Barabbas, a convicted insurrectionist (Mark 15: 6-15, Luke 23: 16-24), and the people, instructed by the priests, chose Barabbas, caring nothing for a Messiah who would allow Himself to be arrested without resistance; the fourth gospel tells of Pilate's still further effort, by appealing to the people's sympathy, to escape giving sentence, even after he had delivered Jesus to the soldiers for the preliminary scourging. Finding the Jews ready to urge, at length, a religious charge, Pilate's superstitious fear was roused (John 19: 7-12), and he sought again to release Him, but was finally cowed by the threat of an accusation against him at Rome, and mocking the people by sitting in judgment to condemn Jesus as their king, he gave sentence against the man whom he knew to be innocent (John 19: 12-16)" (Rhees, *Life of Jesus*, pp. 192-193).

(8) "‘Then he delivered him unto them to be crucified.’ That is what Pilate did with Jesus who was called Christ. And for that dastard act he has stood in the pillory for two thousand years wherever the Christian creed is said, ‘Suffered under Pontius Pilate’" (Paterson-Smyth, *A People's Life of Christ*, p. 458).

(9) The story of the events leading up to the Cross, says Dr. John A. Hutton, "is a story of the Divine Majesty exposing and pronouncing judgment upon those squalid and petty men. They supposed they were being invited to judge Jesus; what was really happening was that Jesus was judging them. . . . Without speaking, Jesus has pronounced judgment upon them for ever in the name alike of God and man. Judas, Pilate, Herod, the Pharisees—these are now so many types of moral obliquity and baseness" (*There They Crucified Him*, pp. 226-227).

(10) "The case is made out and the verdict of Jesus has become history. The leaders in Jerusalem brought upon the city the doom that Jesus foresaw. The Pharisees with the Sadducees invoked the blood of Jesus upon their heads and upon their children, (Matt. 27: 25)" (Robertson, *The Pharisees and Jesus*, p. 156).

(11) "‘We have no king but Caesar!’ What a word to come from the representatives of a nation to which pertained ‘the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises!’ It was the renouncement of their birthright, the abandonment of their destiny. Pilate well knew what it had cost their proud hearts thus to forswear the hopes of their fathers and acknowledge the right of their conqueror; but to compel them to swallow this bitter draught was some compensation for the cup of humiliation they had compelled him to drink. And he took them at their word" (Stalker, *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 113).

(12) "So that it came to this—without indictment, He was arrested. Without evidence, He was accused. Without verdict, guilty or not guilty, He was condemned. He was scourged because He was too good to be slain, yet afterwards He was slain. No one who demanded His death or saw Him die could say what evil He had done. And behind that contradiction of sinners lay a profounder meaning. That meaning was our redemption" (P. Whitwell Wilson, *The Christ We Forget*, p. 284).

IV.

The Via Dolorosa

Scripture Reading.—Matt. 27: 11-32.

Text.—"He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . ." Isa. 53: 3.

WE SHALL CONTINUE HEREIN our narrative of the events immediately leading up to the crucifixion of our Lord.

1. *Pilate's superscription* (John 19: 19-22).

(1) The sentence having been duly pronounced by the Roman governor was executed without delay. Pilate was no doubt anxious to have this Prisoner out of his sight forever. He didn't want even to think of Him again. After giving the final order in some such formula as "*I, miles, expedi crucem*" ("Go, soldier, and make ready the cross"), Pilate waited a few minutes while some of his soldiers stripped Jesus of the mock apparel He was wearing and clad Him again in His own garments, and others hurriedly brought from the storerooms the up-rights and beams for three pine crosses, and hammers, nails and pincers. Then, as a final revengeful jest intended to gall those crafty Jews who had caused all this trouble, the governor dictated the wording of a superscription and a scribe painted it on a piece of white wood in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin: "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." Recognizing the insult the priests protested at once. "Write not, the King of the Jews," they shouted, "but that he said, I am King of the Jews." But Pilate cut them off unceremoniously with an iron declaration, "What I have written I have written," and retired into the palace. It seems that the Victim wore this superscription about His neck until it was later affixed to the head of His cross.

(2) "It added greatly to the significance of the inscription that it was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. What Pilate intended thereby was to heighten the insult; he wished all the strangers present at the Passover to be able to read the inscription; for all of them who could read at all would know one of these three languages. But Providence intended something else. These are the three great languages of the ancient world—the representative languages. Hebrew is the tongue of religion, Greek that of culture, and Latin the language of law and government; and Christ was declared King in them all. On His head are many crowns. He is King in the religious sphere—the King of salvation, holiness and love; He is King in the realm of culture—the treasures of art, of song, of literature, of philosophy belong to Him, and shall yet be

all poured at His feet: He is King in the political sphere—King of kings and Lord of lords, entitled to rule in the social relationships, in trade and commerce, in all the activities of men. We see not yet, indeed, all things put under Him; but every day we see them more and more in the process of being put under Him. The name of Jesus is travelling everywhere over the earth; thousands are learning to pronounce it; millions are ready to die for it. And thus is the unconscious prophecy of Pilate still being fulfilled" (Stalker, *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 172).

2. *The Via Dolorosa* (Mark 15: 20-23, Matt. 27: 31-34, Luke 23: 26-33, John 19: 16, 17).

(1) "The sinister procession moved forward. The Centurion rode at the head, he whom Tacitus calls with terrible brevity, 'exactor mortis.' Immediately after him came, in the midst of the armed legionaries, Jesus and the two thieves who were to be crucified with Him. Each of them carried a cross on his shoulders, according to the Roman rule. And behind them, the shuffling steps and the uproar of the excited crowd, increased at every step by accomplices and idle sight-seers. . . . Everywhere there was that peaceful confusion, that good-natured tumult, that joyous bustle which goes before a great, popular feast-day. An odor of hope and of Spring purified the old filth of the Jewish ant-heap. And the great eastern sun sent down a flood of light upon the four Hills" (Papini, *Life of Christ*, pp. 352-353).

(2) *Simon of Cyrene*. (a) "To support the body of a man, a cross would require to be of a certain size and weight; and to one enfeebled by the horrible severity of the previous scourging, the carrying of such a burden would be an additional misery. But Jesus was enfeebled not only by this cruelty, but by previous days of violent agitation, by an evening of overwhelming emotion, by a night of sleepless anxiety and suffering, by the mental agony of the garden, by three trials and three sentences of death before the Jews, by the long and exhausting scenes in the Praetorium, by the examination before Herod, and by the brutal derisions which He had undergone, first at the hands of the Sanhedrin and their servants, then from Herod's body-guard, and lastly from the Roman cohort. All these superadded to the sickening lacerations of the scourging, had utterly broken down His bodily powers. His tottering footsteps, if not His actual falls under that fearful load, made it evident that He lacked the physical strength to carry it from the Praetorium to Golgotha. Even if they did not pity His feebleness, the Roman soldiers would naturally object to the consequent hindrance and delay. But they found an easy method to solve the difficulty. They had not proceeded farther than the city gate, when they met a man coming from the country, who was known to the early Christians as 'Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus;' and perhaps, on

some hint from the accompanying Jews that Simon sympathized with the teaching of the Sufferer, they impressed him without the least scruple into their odious service" (Farrar, *Life of Christ*, pp. 508-509). (b) "They had not yet come to the Gate of Gardens, but they were almost there when Jesus, His strength utterly exhausted, fell to the ground and lay there stretched under His cross. His face had suddenly gone white as snow; the reddened eyelids were dropped over His eyes; He would have seemed dead if it had not been for the painful breath coming and going through His half-open mouth. . . . The Centurion who, like Pilate, was in great haste to finish his distasteful task, was experienced in the handling of men, and saw clearly that the unfortunate Jesus would never be able to drag the cross along all the way to Golgotha. He cast his eyes about to find some one to carry that weight. Just at the moment there came in from the country a Cyrenian called Simon, who, at the sight of so many people, had stepped into the crowd and was looking with astonished and pitying expressions at the body prostrate and panting under the two beams. The Centurion saw that he had a kindly look, and furthermore that he was strongly built, and called to him, saying, 'Take this cross and come after us.' Without a word the Cyrenian obeyed, perhaps out of goodness of heart, but in any case from necessity, because the Roman soldiers in the countries which they occupied had the right to force any one to help them. 'If a soldier gives you some task to do,' wrote Arrian, 'be careful not to resist him and not to murmur, otherwise you will be beaten.' We know nothing more of the merciful-hearted man who lent his broad countryman's shoulders to lighten Jesus' load, but we know that his sons, Alexander and Rufus, were Christians, and it is extremely probable that they were converted by their father's telling them of the death of which he was an enforced witness" (Papini, *ibid.*, pp. 355-356). (c) "As Jesus was being led from the city a certain Simon of Cyrene was pressed into the service of bearing His cross. The cause of this action is purely a matter of conjecture. Its result was to give Simon immortal fame and apparently to secure for him eternal salvation; for it seems that this experience, and the knowledge of Christ gained at Calvary, resulted in the conversion of Simon and his household (Mark 15: 21; Rom. 16: 13). In a figure, he was the first of that long line of men and women who have taken up the cross and followed Christ" (Erdman, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 214). (d) "The Romans, in their cruelty, usually insisted that those 'which went forth to be crucified,' should carry on their shoulder the cross on which they were about to die—yet another considered piece of cruelty. But Jesus' strength, after the long night and the scourging, failed him completely. . . . So when the soldiers who escorted Jesus encountered Simon of Cyrene (Cyrenaica in Africa), a resident of Jerusalem (whose sons Alexander and Rufus seem later to have joined the Christians), 'coming from the country' . . . they compelled

him to carry the cross. From Pilate's Praetorium in the Phasael Tower, they went to Golgotha (so-called because it was a *skull-shaped* hill, not because it was the place of execution and filled with human skulls)" (Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. by Danby, p. 351).

(3) *Daughters of Jerusalem* (Luke 23: 27-31). Luke is the only writer who records this incident. (a) "It is not to be supposed that these were the loyal friends who had followed Jesus on His journeys and helped to supply His needs: these were rather residents of Jerusalem whose hearts were bleeding with sorrow for the loving Prophet who was being led forth to an agonizing death. Our Lord turned to these women with a message of sympathy and told them they were not to weep for Him but for themselves and their children. He was not rebuking them for their compassion; He rather meant to indicate that while His sufferings were pitiful, their own were more worthy of tears, for they were to be ever more intense. He had in mind the destruction of the city due to its impenitence and made certain by its rejection of the Redeemer. Jesus declared that the days would come when childlessness would be a ground for congratulation because of the universal distress. He predicted that the horror would be so great that men would call upon the mountains to fall on them and the hills to cover them, preferring such forms of death to the torments which threatened from the armies of Rome. Jesus added a proverb, the force of which is evident even though its exact application may not be clear: 'For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' In other words, if the sufferings of Christ were so great, what would be the sufferings of the Jews! (If the Romans were putting to death Him whom they regarded as innocent, what would they do to the inhabitants of the rebellious and hated city?)" (Erdman, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 214). (b) "The fig-tree of their nation's life was still green: if such deeds of darkness were possible now what should be done when that tree was withered and blasted, and ready for the burning? If in the days of hope and decency, they could execrate their blameless Deliverer, what would happen in the days of blasphemy and madness and despair? If, under the full light of day, Priests and Scribes could crucify the Innocent, what would be done in the midnight orgies and bloodstained bacchanalia of zealots and murderers? (This was a day of crime; that would be a day when crime had become her own avenging fury. The solemn warning, the last sermon of Christ on earth, was meant primarily for those who heard it; but, like all the words of Christ, it has deeper and wider meaning for all mankind. Those words warn every child and man that the day of careless pleasure and blasphemous disbelief will be followed by the crack of doom; they warn each human being who lives in pleasure on earth, and eats, and drinks, and is drunken, that though the patience of God waits, and His silence is unbroken, yet the days shall come when He shall speak in thunder and His

wrath shall burn like fire") (Farrar, *Life of Christ*, p. 510). (c) "So it actually turned out. An outstanding feature of the siege of Jerusalem, according to the secular historian, was the suffering of the women and children. Besides using every other device of warfare, the Romans deliberately resorted to starvation, and the inhabitants endured the uttermost extremities of hunger. So frenzied did the men become at last that every extra mouth requiring to be filled became an object of delirious suspicion, and the last morsels were snatched from the lips of the women and children. One is tempted to quote some of the stories of Josephus about this, but they are so awful that it would be scarcely decent to repeat them" (Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 153).

(4) *Legends of the Via Dolorosa*. The two incidents described above are the only incidents of the *Via Dolorosa* mentioned in the gospel narratives. There are two interesting legends, however, which are connected with this phase of our Lord's incarnate experience: (a) The first is that of the *Wandering Jew*. "It is narrated," writes Dr. Stalker, "that when the divine Sufferer, burdened with the cross, was creeping along feebly and slowly, He leaned against the door of a house which stood in the way, when the occupier, striking a blow, commanded Him to hurry on; to which the Lord, turning to His assailant, replied: 'Thou shalt go on and never stop till I come again;' and to this day, unable to find either rest or death, the miserable man still posts over the earth, and shall continue to do so until the Lord's return. This is the legend of the Wandering Jew, which assumed many forms in the lore of other days, and still plays a somewhat prominent part in literature. It is, I suppose, a fantastic representation, in the person of an individual, of the tragic fate of the Jewish race, which, since the day when it laid violent hands on the Son of God, has had no rest for the sole of its foot" (*Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 143). (b) The second is the legend of *Veronica's Napkin*. "To another story of the *Via Dolorosa* as distinguished a place has been given in art as to the legend of the Wandering Jew in literature. Veronica, a lady in Jerusalem, seeing Christ, as He passed by, sinking beneath His burden, came out of her house and with a towel washed away the blood and perspiration from His face. And lo! when she examined the napkin with which the charitable act had been performed, it bore a perfect likeness of the Man of Sorrows. Some of the greatest painters have reproduced this scene, and it may be understood as teaching the lesson that even the commonest things in life, when employed in acts of mercy, are stamped with the image and superscription of Christ" (Stalker, *ibid.*, p. 144).

(5) "Thus in the *Via Dolorosa* Jesus experienced two alleviations of His suffering: the strength of a man relieved His body of the burden of the cross, and the pain of His soul was cooled by the sympathy of women. Is it not a parable—a parable of what men and women can do for Him still? Christ needs

the strength of men—the strong arm, the vigorous hand, the shoulders that can bear the burden of His cause; He seeks from men the mind whose originality can plan what needs to be done, the resolute will that pushes the work on in spite of opposition, the liberal hand that gives ungrudgingly what is required for the progress and success of the Christian enterprise. From women He seeks sympathy and tears. They can give the sensibility which keeps the heart of the world from hardening; the secret knowledge which finds out the objects of Christian compassion and wins their confidence; the enthusiasm which burns like a fire at the heart of religious work. The influence of women is subtle and remote; but it is on this account all the more powerful; for they sit at the very fountains, where the river of human life is springing, and where a touch may determine its entire subsequent course" (Stalker, *ibid.*, pp. 149-150).

3. *The Crucifixion* (Matt. 27: 35-56, Mark 15: 24-41, Luke 23: 33-49, John 19: 18-30).

(1) The scene of the Crucifixion was "a locality called Golgotha, situated outside Jerusalem, but near the walls of the city. The name *Golgotha* signifies a skull; it seems to correspond to our word *Chaumont*, and probably designated a bare eminence, in form like a bald skull. Where this was situated is not exactly known" (Renan, *Life of Jesus*, p. 387).

(2) "Crucifixion is the most terrible and cruel death which man has ever devised for taking vengeance on his fellow man. Cicero describes it as *crudelissimum teterrimumque supplicium* (the most cruel and horrifying death), and Tacitus refers to it as *supplicium servile* (a despicable death). It came from Persia where, it apparently rose out of the desire not to suffer the condemned victim to defile the earth, which was sacrosanct to Ahura Mazda (Ormuzd); thence it passed to Carthage and so to the Romans, who employed it as a punishment for rebels, renegade slaves and the lowest types of criminal. Josephus, an eye-witness, tells how that 'joy of human kind,' Titus (who read Josephus' work), crucified so many Jewish captives and fugitives during the siege of Jerusalem, that there was not sufficient room for the crosses nor sufficient crosses for the condemned" (Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 349).

(3) "When arrived at the place of execution, the victims were offered, according to Jewish usage, a strong aromatic wine—a narcotic drink which, from a feeling of pity, was given to the condemned to stupefy him. It appears that the women of Jerusalem often brought this kind of wine for the dying to the unfortunates who were being led to execution: when there was none thus presented, it was purchased at the expense of the public treasury. Jesus, after having touched the rim of the cup with his lips, refused to drink. This sad consolation of common sufferers did not accord with his exalted nature. He preferred to quit life with perfect clearness

of mind, and to await in full consciousness the death he had willed and brought upon himself. He was then divested of his garments and fastened to the cross. The cross was composed of two beams, tied in the form of the letter T. It was so little raised that the feet of the condemned almost touched the earth. They began by setting it up; they next fastened the sufferer to it by driving nails into his hands; the feet, though often nailed, were sometimes only bound with cords. A piece of wood was fastened like a spar to the shaft of the cross, at half-height, passing between the legs of the condemned, who rested on it. Without this the hands would have been torn, and the body would have sunk down. At other times a small horizontal rest was fixed at the height of the feet, and supported them. Jesus experienced these horrors in all their atrocity. The two robbers were crucified, one on each side of him. The executioners, to whom were usually left the small effects of the victims, drew lots for his garments, and watched him, sitting at the foot of the cross" (Renan, *Life of Jesus*, pp. 390-391).

(4) "They have laid Him unresisting on that rough black cross. Through His hands and feet they drive the cruel spikes. Now by combined effort the cross is lifted up and dropped into its socket, tearing through every nerve and muscle in the merciless shock. And the Son of God in His awful pain is looking forth—on the fair city that had cast Him out to die, and the soldiers at His feet throwing dice for His clothes, and the priests brutally exulting in their victory, and the holiday crowd out to see the spectacle" (Paterson-Smyth, *A People's Life of Christ*, p. 459).

Conclusion: "And there they crucified him."

But the crucifixion of our Lord did not end at Golgotha. It has been going on continuously from that day to this; and today there are multiplied thousands who are crucifying Him afresh and putting Him to an open shame!

You one-time professors of the faith; you who were loyal to Him when you attended "the old home church in the wildwood"; you who have joined the ranks of the careless and indifferent since you moved to the city; you who have been keeping your church membership, in the form of a "church letter" now yellow with age, in an old trunk or bureau drawer somewhere, where not even the devil himself could find it—how much longer will you continue to drive the cruel spikes through His hands and feet by your indifference and neglect? You are "unfruitful branches," and unless you repent and confess your sins to God, and give yourselves anew to His service, you will be eternally severed from the Vine and "cast off" to be burned with fire!

You so-called "church members," you nominal Christians who have a "form of godliness" only, you careless professors, you habitual absentees; you traitors to His cause who, by your carelessness, have been shouting, "Away with him! Crucify him!"—when will you come to your senses and realize that, if you persist in such a course of neglect, the latter end will be worse for you than the beginning? How much longer will you neglect this great salvation, count the blood of the covenant wherewith you were sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace! I plead with you to repent and do works meet for repentance. For unless you do repent, you shall all likewise perish! Turn, turn, before it is everlastingly too late.

"Wherever greed and selfishness
Strive for the mastery of men,
And crush the soul which God would bless—
There, Christ is crucified again.

"Wherever War Lords lift their arms
To drench the earth with blood and pain,
And men repeat their false alarms—
There, Christ is crucified again.

"Wherever children toil for bread
And cry for justice all in vain,
Like victims to the altar led—
There, Christ is crucified again.

Wherever at the heart's closed door
The Master stands and knocks in vain,
Because the soul loves 'these things more'—
There, Christ is crucified again.

—Selected.

V.

The Death of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Phil. 2: 1-11.

Text.—"and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."
Phil. 2: 8.

HERE WE FIND the doctrine of the *Kenosis*, or "the Humiliation of God," linked inseparably with "the death of the cross."

There are two scriptures which deal with this doctrine of the *Kenosis*: (1) Phil. 2: 5-10, in which Paul treats of it as to *nature* and *fact*; (2) Heb. 2: 14-18, in which the inspired writer states the *purpose* of it.

As to *nature* and *fact* we are told that God divested Himself of a portion of His deity and, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, assumed a body of flesh (cf. John 1: 14); as to *purpose*, it was that He might serve as our sympathetic and merciful High Priest.

In Phil. 2: 5-10 the Apostle describes in detail His humiliation and subsequent exaltation as follows:

1. *His eternal pre-existence.* He says that the One whom we know as Jesus the Christ (1) existed "in the form of God," i.e., He was deity as to His eternal nature; and (2) on a plane of "equality with God." In brief, He was deity as to nature; yet, at the same time, He was a distinct Person co-equal with the Father. Modern attempts to reduce Him to a purely human status become, in the light of this scripture, "the cheapest kind of nonsense" (Cf. John 8: 58, 17:5; Col. 1: 17; Heb. 1: 3, etc.).

"I am in the form of a man. I do not count it an honor to be grasped to be on an equality with men. It is my natural and lawful heritage, and I never think of it in any other light. Men have bodies—so have I; men have minds—so have I; anything any man has by nature, that I have also. Hence I count it no presumption to say that I am on an equality with men. This I take it as the apostle's meaning here. Whatever form or attributes the eternal Father had, belonged to the Son also; and Christ did not count it as an honor to be clutched, because it was simply His by nature and right" (Meade E. Dutt, *Christian Standard*, Aug. 31, 1918).

Cf. also John 1: 1-3. Note that the Logos was not only *with* God (i.e., there were Two); but that He also *was* God (co-eternal). The Word also became flesh and dwelt among us (verse 14).

2. His humiliation.

(1) He "emptied himself," i.e., divested Himself of certain attributes of Deity. He did this *voluntarily*, and the motive which prompted Him to do it was *love*. While in the "form" of God, He possessed the attributes of God, and was unlimited by any material conceptions, such as those of time, space or substance. But when He emptied Himself, He assumed the "form" of a man. He laid His heavenly glory and majesty aside, and assumed a human body. He stripped Himself of all outward manifestations of Godhead and subjected Himself to the laws of the physical world.

(2) He took the "form of a servant." The Greek means *bondservant*, literally *slave*. From the highest type of personality, He descended to the lowest. Nothing like it in all history—from a monarch to a slave, and that willingly.

(3) He became "obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." He did so, let me repeat, willingly. "Thinkest thou not that I cannot pray to my Father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"—thus He spoke to Peter at the time of His betrayal. He obeyed to the utmost—even unto death. In assuming a human body, he subjected Himself to all the ills "the flesh is heir to," not even excepting death itself. He died—yet the Father did not permit His Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2: 27). The miracle of Resurrection counteracted *mortification*.

(4) The form of His death was *a crucifixion*—the most pitiable, cruel and ignominious form of death known to man. He died, in Roman eyes, the death of a *slave*; in Jewish eyes, the death of the "cursed." God never does anything by halves; and in this, as in all cases, He "went the limit." He descended to the lowest depths.

3. His subsequent exaltation.

(1) Hear Him pray for His own exaltation and glorification, as recorded in John 17: 5. God surely answered this prayer.

(2) God the Father received Him back into heavenly glory.

(3) God the Father invested Him with the scepter of the heavenly kingdom, i.e., all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28: 18).

(4) God the Father gave unto Him a name which is above every name (Acts 4: 11-12).

(5) God the Father set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. "All the glories which He had so willingly laid aside at the beginning of His humiliation are bestowed upon Him now with greater fulness than ever—not *clutched* by Him, but *bestowed* upon Him."

Conclusion: The motive that prompted this voluntary humiliation was divine love (John 15: 13). It was in view of man's lost condition (John 3: 16).

He thus also qualified Himself to act as our just and

merciful High Priest, by having experienced in His own person the weaknesses and trials of our human nature.

By His death and subsequent resurrection, He has also delivered us from the bondage of the fear of death (Heb. 2: 15). He has conquered the grave, dispelled its shadows and terrors, and opened to our view the land of glory and honor and immortality.

His death and resurrection marked not the end, but the *beginning* of His reign and work

(In this connection, the following two poems are especially meaningful):

"THE NAZARENE"

"So the Nazarene is dead,'
Caiaphas the High-Priest said.
'His wonder-working deeds are o'er,
He will trouble us no more.
May blasphemers such as he
Perish on the shameful tree,
And our holy Temple's law
Be kept free from ev-ry flaw;
For the Temple must have sway
Till heaven and earth shall pass away.'

"So the Nazarene is dead,'
Caiaphas the High-Priest said.

"So the Nazarene is dead,'
In his palace Pilate said.
'Good his words and just his life,
But the priests who stirred up strife
Said his followers would be
From imperial Rome set free.
Vain their plotting and their care—
All the yoke of Rome must bear—
Rome that will for ever stand
Mighty lord of every land.'

"So the Nazarene is dead,'
In his palace Pilate said.

"The Temple now has passed away,
Ended Rome's imperial day,
But the Nazarene still lives,
Peace to myriad souls He gives,
Lives in gentle words and deeds,
In all that meets the spirit's needs;
And the cross on which He died,
By His death is sanctified.

Hosts in many lands acclaim
The Crucified One by His name;
In their faithful hearts are seen
The ever-living Nazarene.

"Priest and Pilate both have said
That the Nazarene is dead.
False their wisdom—false their lore—
He lives now and evermore."

—William E. A. Axon.

"AFTER CALVARY"

"Pilate:

"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"—
The crown of thorns I had them plait.
Mockery may uncover truth—
What is truth? . . . I asked him that.

"His kingdom was not of this world, he said.
Funny—I half believed him, too.
There was something regal in his look.
He was a curious growth—that Jew."

"Caiaphas:

"I tell no secret when I say
That I despise the Roman worm,
But I did like to see the way
The people made him twist and squirm!

"Then finally the sentence passed—
But passed with far too ill a grace.
And he must weasel at the last
And wash his hands—to save his face!

"The Roman worm. . . . But still he gave
The sentence . . . as he should have done.
That other one, though, he was brave.
Aye . . . he was brave . . . that other one."

"Iscariot:

"We dipped our hands in the dish together.
I kissed the face I had loved so well.
And here is a halter that will tether
Another ass in the fields of hell."

"John:

"Not when Moses and Elias talked with Him upon the mountain,
Not at Patmos or Golgotha was the time when first I heard
The apocalyptic whispers, learned the lesson of his teachings,
Knew the alpha and omega of the love that was his word.

"In the shadow of his shoulders, in the breast whereon I rested,
Was the lectern where the Word made Flesh was spread
for me to see.

Full of grace and truth I saw it, saw the Word and saw its
glory,

For he gave the keys to Peter . . . but he gave his heart to
me."

—James L. Duff, in *Poetry*, Chicago.

He shall reign until every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that "he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"; "till he hath put all enemies under his feet," even death itself (1 Cor. 15: 25, 26).

My sinner friend, if you refuse to make this good confession in *faith*, here and now; you will make it in everlasting *remorse* and *despair*, hereafter.

VI.

The Joy Set Before Him

Scripture Reading.—Heb. 12: 1-3.

Text.—"who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame . . ." Heb. 12: 2.

WE LEARN HERE that one of the things which sustained Jesus and helped carry Him through the suffering of Gethsemane and Calvary was the *prospect of the joy that awaited Him "beyond the veil."*

On the night of His betrayal, in the course of His intercessory petition to the Father, He prayed: "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17: 5). God heard and answered this prayer. The Father received Him back into eternal glory, set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, and invested Him with the scepter of His Kingdom. All this was included in "the joy that was set before him."

On the way to the Cross, Jesus said to a group of women: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children" (Luke 23: 28). That is: "Weep not for me, weep rather for the departing grandeur of your city and people. I am going on to glory, but your nation is plunging headlong into destruction."

We should not dwell sadly on what Luke has called our Lord's "passion" (Acts 1: 3). Beyond the sufferings of His last week in the flesh lay the glories that followed the Cross and the empty tomb. This "joy that was set before him" included:

1. The joy of reunion with the Father.
2. The joy of meeting His saints in glory (1 Thess. 4: 13-18).
3. The joy of leading His church to ultimate victory over all her enemies (1 Cor. 15: 20-28).

Let this be a lesson for us. We have our Gethsemanes and our Calvaries as we journey through this life—they are inevitable. As Ella Wheeler Wilcox has written:

"Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
Bridged over by our broken dreams;

Behind the misty cap of years,
Behind the great salt fount of tears,
The garden lies. Strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way.
All paths that have been, or shall be,
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

"All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate,
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
'Not mine but Thine!'—who only pray,
'Let this cup pass!'—and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane."

We should therefore always be looking forward to the joy that is set before us in the precious and exceeding great promises of our God (2 Pet. 1: 4). "Many mansions;" "the city which hath foundations;" "glory and honor and incorruption;" "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens;" "the city foursquare;" "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" etc. Looking, then, unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, let us "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12: 2). Let us make our pilgrimage of faith as those who "desire a better country, that is, a heavenly" country (Heb. 11: 16). (See John 14: 2, Heb. 11: 10, Rom. 2: 7, Rev. 21: 16, 2 Cor. 5: 1, 2 Pet. 3: 13, etc.).

VII.

The Groups Around the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Isa. 53: 1-11.

Text.—"When he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Isa. 53: 7.

LET US NOW TURN our attention away from the Cross and its Victim, for a few moments, and center it upon the various groups assembled around the Cross. A study of the attitudes of these different groups will prove both interesting and illuminating. They were four in number: (1) the Roman soldiers, (2) the Jewish leaders, (3) the women who were disciples of Jesus, and (4) the crowd.

1. *The attitude of the Roman soldiers was that of cold-blooded indifference.*

(1) To them, post-graduates of a lifelong schooling in callous disregard for human life, this execution was but a routine task. They treated it as such. We cannot judge them too harshly, however, because they were merely the instruments of the state, victims of a cruel, fatalistic system; nor can we censure them too severely for turning the tragedy into horse-play and jest at times, because their irreverence was but the legitimate offspring of their training and incidental to their cynical attitude towards life. The soldiers *mocked* Him, Luke says. This is a word picture: *Pais* means a child, whence *Paizo* as used here means to play in the manner of children. And what after all were these poor souls but children! How could they have known better? How could they be expected to have understood the awful significance of that sublime tragedy in which they were participating!

(2) Particularly was the superscription, which Pilate had caused to be painted and nailed to the Cross above the Master's head, a source of merriment to them. "King of the Jews!" they sneered; "if thou art a king of the Jews, save thyself!" I am convinced, however, that this taunting wasn't intended for the Sufferer so much as it was for the ears of those Jewish scribes and priests who were standing close by. Here was an opportunity to pour a little salt into a raw wound and those Romans were more than willing to take advantage of it. "When the Cross was uplifted," says Farrar, "the leading Jews, for the first time, prominently noticed the deadly insult in which Pilate had vented his indignation. Before, in their blind rage, they had imagined that the manner of His cru-

cifixion was an insult aimed at *Jesus*; but now that they saw Him hanging between the two robbers, on a cross yet loftier, it suddenly flashed upon them that it was a public scorn inflicted upon *them*. For on the white wooden tablet smeared with gypsum, which was to be seen so conspicuously over the head of Jesus on the cross, ran, in black letters, an inscription in the three civilized languages of the ancient world . . . informing all that this Man who was thus enduring a shameful, servile death—the Man thus crucified between two *sicarii* in the sight of the world—was ‘THE KING OF THE JEWS’” (*Life of Christ*, pp. 513-514).

(3) Their indifference is particularly noticeable in the irreverent manner in which they sat down at the foot of the Cross and cast dice for the Savior’s garments. “Look at them!” writes Dr. Stalker, “chaffering, chattering, laughing; and above their heads, not a yard away, that Figure! What a picture! The Son of God atoning for the sins of the world, whilst angels and glorified spirits crowd the walls of the celestial city to look down at the spectacle; and, within a yard of His sacred Person, the soldiers in absolute apathy gambling for these poor shreds of clothing.” Yes, those soldiers were instinctively gamblers! Life to them was a gamble, and they gambled with everything in life! *Greed* may have also motivated them. As someone has written: “Nothing but utilitarian interest—that’s all. A game of chance played at the foot of Calvary! Nothing is sacred in the eyes of greed. Religion, chastity, morals must go, when greed lays hold on a man’s heart. Divine sacrifice and human greed met at the Cross. They meet today in every walk of life!”

(4) “And sitting down, they watched him there.

The soldiers did;

There, while they played with dice,

He made his sacrifice,

And died upon the Cross to rid

God’s world of sin.

He was a gambler, too, my Christ—

He took his life and threw

It for a world redeemed.

And ere his agony was done,

Before the westering sun went down,

Crowning that day with crimson crown,

He knew that he had won.”

—G. A. Studdert-Kennedy.

(5) After all in what respect were those Roman soldiers so different from thousands of our own day and age, even in so-called Christian lands, who live in abject irreverence and indifference,

“Just as if Jesus had never lived,
As if He had never died?”

Just how much—or possibly how *little*—do *you* care, my friend, that Jesus once lived and died in this world, this world that would have become lost forever, had not Jesus lived and died in it? You care about making a living of course, about giving your children an education, about making a name for yourself in business, art, politics or industry; you care about your golf, your radio, your automobile, or your vacation; you care a lot about your business; you may, every four years, go partially insane over political issues and candidates; *but how much do you really care about your soul and about Jesus?* Just how much less indifferent are you than those hard-hearted Roman soldiers who gambled for the Savior's few garments? I am putting this question to *you* personally, to you yourself, not to the one sitting by you, and I call upon you to answer it personally and for *yourself* alone. Aren't you a *gambler*, too? Aren't you just about as *pagan*, in your indifference and carelessness, as were those Roman soldiers? What about it?

2. *The attitude of the Jewish leaders was that of antipathy swelling at times into vindictiveness and hate.*

(1) They scoffed at Him, Luke says (23: 35). Here we have another word picture: from *mukter*, "the nose," comes *mukteriso*, which means "to contract the nose in contempt."

(2) They pelted Him with epithets uttered in derision and scorn, such as "the Son of God," "the Chosen of God," "the King of Israel," "the Christ," "the King of the Jews," etc.—names and titles which had been applied to Him or which He had assumed for Himself in His teaching. "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it up in three days!" "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross!" "He saved others; himself he cannot save!" Thus "they poured out the gall which had long been accumulating in their hearts;" not noticing, in their venomous abandon, that they were using the very expressions attributed in the twenty-second Psalm to the enemies of the divine Savior. Of course Jesus might have answered them had He so desired or had there been anything to have been gained by it. One wonders whether or not He was tempted to come down from the Cross on hearing these challenges from all sides. How easily He could have allowed His glory to blaze forth to confound them or have called down fire from heaven to consume them! But had He saved Himself, He could not have been the Savior of mankind. "Had He saved Himself, He would not have been the Savior. Yet the power that kept Him on the Cross was a far mightier One than would have been necessary to leave it. It was not by the nails through His hands and feet that He was held, nor by the ropes with which His arms were bound, nor by the soldiers watching Him; no, but by invisible bands, by the cords of redeeming love and by the constraint of a Divine design" (Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus*).

Christ, p. 180). So He answered not a word. "When he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" (Isa. 53: 7).

3. *The attitude of the people.*

(1) The people at first followed the example of their rulers, so that "the crowd under His eyes became a sea of scorn, whose angry waves dashed up against His cross." Such fury, however—manufactured fury, the fury of the mob—soon spends itself. The people were soon sickened by the brutality of the affair. Moreover, the kingly silence of the Man of Sorrows, "joined to His patient majesty and the divine holiness and influence which radiated from Him like a halo" was sufficient to quell the most riotous demonstration. And when the darkness began to settle down over the land, the tumult of derision subsided into a hush of superstitious awe, broken only here and there by cries of fear. Many, alarmed by the lowering of that mysterious darkness, fled from the Hill of the Skull as if ten thousand phantoms were pursuing them; but many no doubt remained there, waiting for the death-rattle to be heard in the Victim's throat. Then at the last came the earthquake. This was sufficient to strike fear into the hearts of the most skeptical, so that many of those who lingered to the end went back to their homes, when it was all over, "smiting their breasts" in an agony of remorse (Luke 23: 48); "probably a prophecy of Israel's future repentance and mourning as they 'look on him whom they have pierced'" (Erdman, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 220).

4. *The attitude of the women* (Luke 23: 47-49, Mark 15: 40, 41, Matt. 27: 55, 56, John 19: 25-27).

(1) The most pathetic group of all was that little band of disciples who "stood afar off" gazing upon the scene in bewilderment. For them the significance of the Cross would not begin to dawn until their meeting with the risen Lord, the Conqueror of death and the grave. Just now they were waiting, hoping against hope, for a miracle, for God to open the gates of glory and walk out in thunders and lightnings as He had done at Sinai in days of old. But when no miracle came, and when there was no longer any doubt that their Master was dead, they straggled away from the place disappointed, disillusioned, heartsick, their hopes as dead as the body which hung upon that middle cross! They said one to another, "But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel" (Luke 24: 21).

(2) Among the disciples present were the few women who had served Him so faithfully in His public ministrations. They were huddled together as near the Cross as they dared be; no doubt they would have rushed forward and thrown their arms around His limbs and bathed His feet with their tears,

had it not been for those unfeeling legionaries sitting there casting dice for His garments. The names of these few women have gone down in the list of the world's immortals. First of all there was the heart-broken Mother, who had once been the Virgin Mary. With her were Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Salome the mother of James and John, and perhaps also Joanna, wife of Chuza. What must have been their varied emotions in this crisis! The same growing despair, the same sickening disappointment the disciples felt on seeing the cause collapse to which they had given themselves for time and eternity! But at the same time an overwhelming love for the Crucified One, an overpowering pity as they suffered with Him, and a profound yearning that they might be permitted to die for Him! What comfort it must have given Him, on the other hand, to turn His eyes away occasionally from the brutal soldiers gambling at His feet, from the swinish priests and scribes howling and dancing around His cross, towards that little group of sorrowing women there to find in their sympathetic glances a small measure of the consolation which gives renewed strength! "This neighborly sympathy and womanly love must, on the whole, have been a profound comfort and support. He was sustained all through His sufferings by the thought of the multitudes without number who would benefit from what he was enduring; but here before His eyes was an earnest of His reward; and in them He saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied" (Stalker, *ibid.* p. 183).

(3) "My friend, Dr. John H. Finley, sings of that universal Cross of Christendom:

'Mary the Mother of Christ was there
 And John whom He'd chosen to care for her;
 Simon who'd helped Him His Cross to bear
 And Joseph who'd offered his sepulchre;
 He who had come under darkness' guard
 And she that 'loved much' on her bended knees,
 Magdalene, bringing her precious nard;
 All Christendom stands at the Cross with these.'

Truly this beautiful verse expresses our post-Easter devotion! It still centers at Calvary. There Mary is the Queen of all holy motherhood which has surrendered its offspring to the Eternal Will. There John is typical of the inner fellowship of saints who understand to some extent the mystery of redemption through the suffering of the highest for the lowliest. There Simon represents other races than the white man's and he speaks the universality of their rights in God's Kingdom. There Joseph acts as an escort for the rich who dedicate their wealth to the extension of that Kingdom. There Magdalene is most welcome to all who have sinned and who might find in the Crucified One the assurance of God's restored confidence in them. So though the great festival of the human heart is over, and life, re-invigorated by its joy and power

resumes its ordinary course, we still gather at the Cross" (Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, *Christian Herald*, May 2, 1925).

(4)

"A MOTHER UNDERSTANDS"

"Dear Lord, I hold my hand to take
Thy body broken once for me,
Accept the sacrifice I make,
My body, broken, Christ, for Thee.

"His was my body, born of me,
Born of my bitter travail pain,
And it lies broken on the field,
Swept by the wind and the rain.

"Surely a mother understands, Thy thorn-crowned head,
The mystery of Thy pierced hands—the Broken Bread!"

—G. A. Studdert-Kennedy.

(5) "Has it ever occurred to you to ask in which group you would have been had you been there? This is a searching question. Of course it is easy now to say which were right and which were wrong. It is always easy to admire the heroes and the causes of bygone days; but it is possible to do so and yet be apathetic or antipathetic to those of our own. Even the Roman soldiers at the foot of the cross admired Romulus and Cincinnatus and Brutus, though they had no feeling for the One at their side greater than these. The Jews who were mocking Christ admired Moses and Samuel and Isaiah. Christ is still bearing His Cross through the streets of the world, and is hanging exposed to contempt and ill-treatment; and it is possible to admire the Christ of the Bible and yet be persecuting and opposing the Christ of our own century. The Christ of today signifies the truth, the cause, the principle of Christ, and the men and women in whom these are embodied. We are either helping or hindering those movements on which Christ has set His heart; often, without being aware of it, men choose their sides and plan and speak and act either for or against Christ. This is the Passion of our own day, the Golgotha of our own city" (Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, pp. 183-184).

Conclusion: In striking contrast with the emotions and attitudes of these different groups, is the sublime serenity of the One Crucified.

(1) "By His matchless behavior up to and on the Cross this great Redeemer achieved something infinitely higher than political emancipation. The dark inward despotism of hateful sin was there being broken forever. It behooved Him, therefore, on Whom the grim struggle turned, to be as faultless in inward spirit as He was in outward bearing. If His sacrifice

had been vitiated by anger, ill will or malediction, what a still deeper tragedy the Cross would have become! If the least disloyalty to the Supreme Will had stained the Sacred Tree its horrors would have multiplied beyond the telling. But there you find no impatient distrust of the Father's purpose or power to vindicate the dying Friend of sinners. There are no half whispered misgivings of God's truth and faithfulness. No thought, word or deed which would have left the moral destiny of mankind in the grasp of wickedness and death invaded the Supremacy of the Holy Rood. It is the one Tree in all God's forest avenues blossoming with eternal life and hope for every transgressor.

"Christ's meekness, resting as it did upon this divinest basis of sacrifice and expiation, exhibits a transcendence which resistance has never owned. Think of it, worshipers of force, believers in armed might enlisted even for right's protection! Consider, I pray you, what contradictions against Himself this Man of Sorrows bore, and how and why He bore them. No martyrdom, however sublime, vies with the Offering on Calvary. Its incomparable qualities lift it above the most heroic and forlorn and stand against overwhelming odds. A strange silence surrounds the spot where Jesus died. A solemn hush befits the aura encircling His gibbet. We come to the most venerated spot on the planet; to its Holy of Holies, to its altar and its throne in one. I appeal to all who have read its records that the temper of the Lamb of God is our chief witness to His spiritual over-lordship.

"His unrepining attitude, maintained in the presence of judicial butchery, was nothing extraordinary for Him. It had marked the whole of His public life. When He was assailed by the vituperations of scribes and the invectives of Pharisees no bitter or passionate syllable passed His lips. He uttered no recrimination when they blasphemed, and charged that His beneficence was due to collusion with demons. He was defamed as a drunkard, a madman, or what was almost worse in Jewish eyes, a Samaritan. These malignant shafts glanced off His shining armor, leaving Him serene and victorious. Arrogant and hypercritical High Priest, cruel and imperious Herod, vacillating and cowardly Pilate, could not disturb His peace. He surrendered His body to the smiter, to the lictor who bound Him on the cross, to the soldiers whose hammers drove in the nails. One prayer and one only broke that hallowed silence: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' . . . When was there such a death as this, apart from its sacramental or its theological significance? The Kingly Christ passes through the tribulations and trials of His crucial phase uncomplainingly, without accusation against those who had robbed Him of His right to justice and of His life. There have been countless deaths of moment, of honor, and of glory: found at the martyr's stake, in the arena of the ravenous lions, and on the fields of war. But Christ's Cross towers above them all" (Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, *Christian Herald*, April 10, 1925).

(2) "Let us now take one final glance at the last days of Jesus. In vain do we try to describe the experience which our humanity passed through in His person in those hours. A few, short, penetrating words upon the injustice of it all to His Judges, a reply full of dignity defending His fundamental integrity, a final avowal in which the meaning of His whole life is brought majestically to a focus, and for the last time hurled as a challenge to an unbelieving world in language that is plain and definite, fearless and sober, unpretentious and yet superlatively forceful—such is the last strong note on which the song passes out. The rest is silence—breathless silence. Agony, it is true, wrests one more cry from the depths of His soul, but in it there is not one trace of hatred, disillusion, or revolt. And now a stillness heavily charged with significance enfolds the cross, in which the greatest duel of our humanity is being fought out in His person. Utter distress is struggling to win the day over purest unselfishness. Agony and torment are doing their worst to shake a will ready to carry trust to the point of abnegation. Triumphant malice is taking the offensive against tenderness that is divine. They conquer not. The silence that envelops the cross now suddenly becomes thicker still and of added solemnity. In the angry sea of human sin the most sublime of lives has gone down—but only as a prelude to a glorious and triumphant victory on Easter morn, imperishable forevermore" (Frederich Rittelmeyer, *Behold the Man*, trans. by Hofacker and Hatfield, Macmillan Co., 1930).

(3)

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.

"We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains He had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

"He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good;
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

"Oh, dearly, dearly has He loved!
And we must love Him, too,
And trust in His redeeming blood,
And try His works to do."

—Mrs. C. F. Alexander.

VIII.

The Seven Words from the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Luke 23: 26-49.

Text.—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Luke 21: 33.

SHAKESPEARE makes John of Gaunt to say, in *Richard II*:

"The tongues of dying men
Enforce attention like deep harmony:
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain."

"The seven recorded utterances ('the seven words') of Jesus during the crucifixion," writes William Bancroft Hill (*Life of Christ*, p. 293), "are precious revelations of what was passing through His mind in these final hours."

1. *Those spoken during the three hours of light:*

(1) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34). Here He spoke as humanity's High Priest interceding for those who were then pursuing Him even unto death.

(a) Priests and scribes and Pharisees were not ashamed to demean themselves by shouting with the rabble: "If thou be the Son of God, come down now from the cross." "Let this Christ, the King of Israel, come down that we may believe!" "He saved others; himself he cannot save!" He heard it. He knew it! Himself He could not save! Poor deluded mockers! So ignorant of what was actually taking place—in fact is not all prejudice and hate born of ignorance. So unknowing that their ravings were being heard by the hosts of heaven and hell! In infinite compassion, He turned His face to the Father who made them all, crying with a sob in His voice, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do!" Hear this prayer of intercession, my friends, and never forget that if you and I are to be godlike, Christlike we must be just as forgiving! And remember, too, that God who was in the world in this Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, is too big, too noble, too divine, to hold grudges. And when you pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," just keep in mind that it is your duty and your privilege to help God answer your prayer!

(b) "They know not what they do." Ignorance as a ground for the forgiveness of wrongdoing is not sufficiently emphasized in theology. Human nature is prone to "assume the

worst reason rather than to judge with charity." In this respect the Roman soldiers were far less accountable than the Jewish scribes and priests who had the testimony of "the law, the psalms and the prophets" to assist them to identify the Messiah at His coming—to which, however, they were stone blind. (See Isa. 6: 9-10, Matt. 13: 14-15, Acts 28: 25-27, 2 Cor. 3: 13-14).

(c) "If only this prayer had been adopted and its spirit followed by all who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ, how different would have been the course of history. Nothing that Jesus said can be quoted in justification of the cruelties that have been practiced in the name of Christianity. No blood can be found upon His hands" (William Jennings Bryan, *Christ and His Companions*, pp. 212-213).

(d) "He did not have in mind simply the soldiers who were involuntary instruments of his death, but rather the Jews who had not fully recognized the enormity of their crime. For them Jesus felt no hatred in his heart. He yearned for their repentance and their salvation. This prayer was a revelation of the matchless grace and mercy of this ideal man" (Erdman, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 216).

(e) "No more divine prayer was ever raised to Heaven since men have lived and prayed; it is not the prayer of a man, but of a God to a God. Men, who cannot pardon even the innocence of an innocent man, had never before that day dreamed that a man might pray for the forgiveness of those who were putting him to death. For they know not what they do! Wrongs consciously wrought cannot be absolved without assurance of repentance. But the ignorance of men is so appallingly great that only a few really know what they do" (Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 358.)

(2) "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23: 43). Here He is revealed as the King of glory promising a penitent robber a place in His kingdom; and not only as the King of glory but also as the Lamb of God "that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29).

(a) "The dying robber had joined at first in the half-taunting, half-despairing appeal to a defeat and weakness which contradicted all that he had hoped; but now this defeat seemed greater than victory, and this weakness more irresistible than strength. As he looked, the faith in his heart dawned more and more into the perfect day. He had long ceased to utter any reproachful words; he now rebuked his comrade's blasphemies. Ought not the suffering innocence of Him who hung between them, to shame into silence their just punishment and flagrant guilt? And so, turning his head to Jesus, he uttered the intense appeal, 'O Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.' Then He, who had been mute amid invectives, spake at once in surpassing answer to that humble

prayer, 'Verily, I say to thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise'" (Farrar, *Life of Christ*, pp. 517-518).

(b) "If ever evil is to be overcome, it must be overcome by good. And love is good in action. Here is an instance of its working. On either side of our Lord there is a malefactor suffering the due rewards of his deeds. At first, both join in reviling Him, hoping, it may be, to secure the sympathy of the crowd, and possibly their own release. After a while the better feelings of one of them are stirred. He has been a bold, bad man by his own confession. But, even in his brigand days, he had wished to follow the strongest. He has found Him at last. Never had he seen such grace and royal dignity. It was a true thing they had written over His head. He reads the inscription and shapes his prayer accordingly. The words told of 'Jesus' the 'King'; so this is his request; 'Jesus, remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom.' It is a modest petition, but the faith behind it is not small. . . . How will the appeal be received? . . . How will He act? We are not left in doubt. The response to the request is made without a moment's delay. The Lord Himself says the 'Amen' to the robber's prayer. 'Verily'—literally *Amen*, 'I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise'" (Arthur W. Robinson, *The Christ of the Gospels*, pp. 171-172).

(c) "The prayer, 'Remember me when thou comest into the kingdom,' was a triumph of faith, to which Jesus responded as He always did. The thief prayed that somehow, somewhere in the unknown future when all is righted, Jesus would not forget a fellow-sufferer, and the reply was that this very day his desire should be satisfied" (William Bancroft Hill, *Life of Christ*, p. 294).

(d) "When shame and darkness covered Him and thee,
What didst thou see,
O thou great penitent of Calvary,
That thou couldst beg this boon as thy reward
For suffering?—"When thou comest to Thy Kingdom
Lord,
Remember me!"

"In that most darkest hour
Of hatred born,
When Satan's power
Showed Love held up to scorn,
What way to thee
Came strength to pray,
'Lord, when Thy kingdom cometh unto Thee,
Remember me?'"

—Selected.

(e) This incident teaches us, says William Jennings Bryan, that "Christ's salvation is for *all*, from *every* sin, throughout *every* moment of man's sojourn upon the earth" (*Christ and His Companions*, p. 216).

(3) "Woman, behold, thy son!" "Behold, thy mother!" (John 19: 26, 27). Here He spoke as the Son of man remembering, in His dying hour, His obligations to His human mother.

(a) It was blazing noon. Three hours of torment had passed. The shouting had ceased. The rabble was tired of the show; some were scattering over the hill. By the Cross stood the soldiers in the sweltering heat, the centurion sitting upon his horse still as a statue. "There was standing by the cross of Jesus His mother." There is no earthly comfort for her now but to be near Him, though she may not even wipe His brow or cool His burning lips. There she stands in her tearless pain, the Mater Dolorosa with 'the sword piercing through her heart,' with her whole soul in agonized gaze on His face who hangs above her. He is Messiah. He is her Lord. She does not forget that, though the mystery is beyond her. But just now above all else He is her son, the infant who lay upon her breast long ago, the bright brave Boy of the Nazareth workshop, the Youth who worked for her when her husband died" (Paterson-Smyth, *A People's Life of Christ*, p. 464).

(b) "He dared not speak her name now, nor reveal His relationship, lest the hostile crowd insult her; but with, 'Woman, behold, thy son,' and 'Behold, thy mother,' He commended her to John who straightway led her from the scene. Whether this meant simply that John should care for her at this terribly trying hour, or whether henceforth he was to act a son's part, as later tradition says he did, cannot be determined. A few weeks later Mary is mentioned, along with her sons, as if they were living together" (William Bancroft Hill, *Life of Christ*, p. 295). This incident "informs us," writes Dr. Stalker, "that our Savior has a concern for our temporal as well as for our eternal interests. Even on the Cross, where He was expiating the sin of the world, He was thinking of the comfort of His widowed mother. Let the needy and the deserted take courage from this, and cast all their care upon Him, for He careth for them" (*Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 224).

2. Those spoken during the three hours of darkness.

(a) "The crucifixion had begun about nine o'clock. About twelve o'clock the clouds thickened into an awesome darkness that lay like the heavy wrath of God over the whole region until three o'clock. (The Peter Gospel says that 'darkness covered Judea.') The early preachers would naturally remember the words of Amos the prophet: 'And it shall come to pass in that day (of wrath), saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day' (Amos 8: 9)" (Bosworth, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus*, p. 388).

(b) "Nature itself seemed to wish to hide the horror of

that sight: the sky, which all the morning had been clear, suddenly grew dark. A thick cloud, dark as though it came from the marshes of hell, rose above the hills and little by little spread to every corner of the horizon. Black clouds gathered about the sun, that sweet, clear April sun, which had warmed the hands of the murderers, encircled it, laid siege to it, and finally covered it with a thick curtain of darkness. . . . 'and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour' (Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 370).

(1) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27: 46). Here He spoke as the Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief, the Sufferer who trod the winepress *alone*.

(a) This, the exact wording of Psalm 22: 1, has been called "the mystery of the dereliction on the Cross, the darkest of all dark nights of the soul." Matthew and Mark preserve in Greek transliteration the very words almost in their Hebrew-Aramaic pronunciation, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani" (Matt. 27: 46; Mark 15: 34).

(b) He now detaches Himself from the last earthly ties and turns to face the deeper, more terrible experiences yet to come, *alone*. Fittingly the struggles of the next three hours are covered by a mantle of darkness—darkness over all the land. Was it a veil reverently let down from heaven? Was it the last call to the conscience of a wicked people? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" How the infidels have fastened upon this apparent weakness! Ah, they gloat, then He *was* mistaken regarding His mission and His Messiahship, and found it out at the end. God didn't recognize Him as He had hoped all along! God turned His face away from Him! Do these words—daringly recorded by honest biographers—convey any such meaning? Of course not.

"Yet once Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken;
It went up single, echoless, My God, I am forsaken!
It went up from His holy lips amid His lost creation,
That no man else need ever cry that cry of desolation!"

(c) "It is unthinkable that God should have been displeased with Jesus in this hour of his supreme obedience, or that he should have created in the mind of Jesus the delusion that he was displeased with him. . . . The pain which was in the heart of God over the brutal wrongdoing of his human children was now to the utmost in the heart of Jesus. It was not simply the pain of stretched tendons, lacerated muscles, and burning thirst. It was chiefly distress of soul. He was feeling the feeling of God about the wrongdoing of mankind. He could have said of himself in this experience, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'" (Bosworth, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus*, p. 390).

(d) "From the moment when the cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' went up out of the deep of

the midday midnight upon Calvary, doubt was for ever consecrated as the last trial of the sons of God; and a trial needed for their purification, no less than pain or parting" (J. R. Illingworth, *Sermons in a College Chapel*, p. 25).

(e) "He who would attain to the mystical science must abandon and be detached from five things: first, from creatures; secondly, from temporal things; thirdly, from the very gifts of the Holy Spirit; fourthly, from himself; and fifthly, he must be detached even from God. This last is the completest of all, because that soul only that knows how to be so detached, is that which attains to being lost in God, and only the soul that attains to being so lost succeeds in finding itself" (Molinos, *The Spiritual Life*, quoted by Unamuno in *The Tragic Sense of Life*, p. 219).

(f) "My God, why?" . . . Is there any answer? . . . Has Life answered? Yes! if Calvary raises these questions, Easter morning answers them. The cross raised the questions, Easter morning raised the Man who gathered up the questions in himself. If life has spoken its hardest, cruelest, bitterest, most pessimistic and despairing word, Life meets it fairly and squarely, and answers it. The answer to the raised questions is the raised Christ. Life's last word is not a cross but an Easter. What are stars, if at last they become radiant? What is a cross, if at the end it lifts me? What is pain, if my pain becomes a paean? What are separations, if I come back more completely and fully than before? What is man's slander, if God affirms? What can winter do, if spring beats in my veins? What of Calvary, if just beyond it lies an Easter morning? I know now that life can speak no harder word than it spoke at the cross, and I know now that life can speak no more adequate word than it spoke at the resurrection. He is risen! Let that word suffice! . . . 'We have a proof in our religion that you haven't in yours,' interrupted 'for when we go to Arabia we can find the tomb of the Prophet, so that we have proof that he lived. But when you go to Jerusalem you cannot be sure that you have the burial place of Jesus. You have no tomb as we have.' 'True,' replied the preacher, 'we have no tomb in our religion, because we have no corpse.' Our gospel ends not in a corpse, but in a Conqueror; not in a tomb, but in a triumph" (E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of Every Road*, pp. 85-86, 89).

(2) "I thirst" (John 19:28). We again hear Him speaking as the Son of man who became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross.

(a) Now that the supreme spiritual struggle was over, bodily craving asserted itself. His spirit was at rest. Out of the depths He had called—and found sweet peace. As in the forty days in the wilderness prior to His temptation He never thought of food, but when the strain was off He was "afterwards an

hungered," so it was here. To a Roman soldier His lips framed the simple request, "I thirst." And the soldier raised a sponge up to them, saturated with vinegar, which He drank.

(b) "The sublimity of His sacrifice is shown in one little incident of that last hour. As they prepared Him for His cross they brought Him a drink of myrrh and wine. This represented a type of rough mercy. The drink acted as a kind of mild anaesthetic, and helped to drug the pain. In a merciless age, it was a symptom of redeeming thoughtfulness. We read that when He had tasted it, He refused to drink. Why? We know that it would have deadened His pain and helped to relieve Him of some little part of His suffering. Why did He put aside the kindly cup? *Because He had already accepted another cup.* He had taken it into His hands in the Garden of Pain. The Father's cup! And He now resolved, in the majesty of His sacrifice, to die with unclouded senses and carry His load with an undimmed mind" (Dr. James Black, *The Dilemmas of Jesus*, pp. 212-213). Jesus had refused the narcotic drink, wine mingled with myrrh, which was offered prisoners prior to crucifixion, because He would not enter the final struggle in a stupor. But this last act of kindly service He did not refuse; there was no reason for refusing it.

(c) "Those who have wandered over a fresh battlefield seldom fail to inform us that the one cry of the sufferers there is for water; all the other agony of torn and crushed and mutilated limbs being forgotten in this agony which excels them all. The cry for water swallows up every other cry" (Archbishop Trench, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, p. 251).

(3) "It is finished" (John 19: 30). Here He spoke as our Redeemer, as the Author and Perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12: 2).

(a) The New Testament is related to the Old, says Dr. Jas. H. Snowden, "as fruit to root."

"What was the sound of Jesus' breath?

He laid His hand on Moses' law;
The ancient Heavens, in silent awe,
Writ with curses from pole to pole,
All away began to roll."

(b) "The first thought suggested is that the terrible suffering is at last completed, and that shame and humiliation can go no further. In that sense the word was most true. Nothing more could be added; that which had seemed to be endless had come to an end. But there was more than that. We may be sure that the thoughts of the Sufferer ranged back into the distant past. He knew that throughout the long history of the Jewish people, preparation had been made and pledges had been given. Hopes had been held out of a mighty Redemption that was to be wrought, and the way had been dimly foreshadowed by mysterious types. Symbols and proph-

cies had pointed to this day. Now at length the fulfillment had come. *Consummatum est*. All was accomplished" (Robinson, *The Christ of the Gospels*, p. 178).

(c) "All Nature—the flowers, the wind, the rainbow, the fire—teaches of God; and so it is with darkness, which, invading the day, shadows forth His displeasure. Let us suppose that it was an eclipse of the sun—in itself a scientific certainty—the coincidence with His expiation would be none the less of a miracle; and, for Him, the gradual lifting of that black gloom was a Divine signal. As the light returned, He cried in triumph, loud above the turmoil, 'It is finished.' He, who did nothing by halves, paid the debt to the uttermost farthing, and in His heaven there is no night" (P. Whitwell Wilson, *The Christ We Forget*, p. 296).

(d) The old and negative gave way to the new and positive. Judaism was primarily negative—"Thou shalt not." So were all the so-called "ethnic religions." So are all non-Christian faiths. "The non-Christian faiths have no Easter morning in them. Hence pessimisms lie like a paralyzing pall upon the souls of these great peoples; they have lost their moral nerve to live, reforms languish or a sporadic religion does not stand behind life. It offers to make one indifferent to life and finally to escape from it. A modern philosopher says that Neo-Platonism was a deification of the word, 'Not.' It therefore died. That word 'Not' has been deified in the East: 'Neti,' 'neti'—'Not that,' 'Not that'—is the highest that can be said of Brahma. And the highest that can be affirmed of life is its virtual negation. If religion approves a negation of life, it will die; for we want and need nothing so desperately as life" (E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of Every Road*, pp. 88-89).

(e) "O love of God, O sin of man!

In this dread act your strength is tried;
And victory remains with love;
Jesus our Lord is crucified."

(4) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23: 46). Here He spoke finally as the Eternal Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, as the Only Begotten Son of God. "And having said this, he gave up the ghost."

(a) He gave Himself now "with an unclouded soul" into the arms of the Everlasting Father. "Father, forgive them," had been His first utterance from the Cross; and in this last word He appealed to the "Father." "Father" was the endearing term which He treasured most. We can't measure all it meant to Him. He had once said to His disciples, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father." That desire was now to be fulfilled. His prayer, "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17: 5), was now to be answered. The Father would receive Him back, now

that His work on earth was finished, into that intimacy of communion which has been theirs from all eternity (John 1: 18). The Father would glorify Him by raising Him from the dead, by setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, and by vesting in Him all authority in heaven and upon earth.

(b) "It is this 'vital spark,' this 'heavenly flame' which defies the tomb. From the Father it came and unto the Father it returns. His children bow in reverent submission to the Almighty's will as they enter that narrow, starlit strip that separates the days of our brief pilgrimage on earth, from our eternal abode in the mansions that Christ has gone on to prepare" (Bryan, *Christ and His Companions*, pp. 216-217).

(c) "Since His redeeming work was finished, He waited no longer for death. He did not endure pain merely for pain's sake, but 'gave up the ghost'—which was His to give up; and while the thieves lived on, He hung there dead. Pilate marveled that He should die so quickly, and the soldiers also did not think that the death was natural. Death itself proved Him divine; and the Centurion who saw it, remembering His words to Pilate, declared, 'Truly, this was the Son of God.' The veil of the Temple was, like His flesh, rent from head to foot, and torn aside; the Holy of Holies in the Son of Man was revealed. His altars are now manifest to all. In His salvation there are no priestly secrets. A child can learn His oracles" (P. Whitwell Wilson, *The Christ We Forget*, pp. 296-297).

Conclusion:

"Rest now in thy glory, noble Founder! Thy work is completed; thy divinity is established. Fear no more to see the edifice of thy efforts crumble through any fault! Henceforth, beyond all frailty, thou shalt aid from the depth of thy divine peace the unending results that follow from thy deeds. At the cost of a few hours of suffering, which have not even touched thy great soul, thou hast achieved immortality the most complete. During thousands of years, the world will breathe life from thee. Around thee, as an ensign lifted above our conflicts, will be fought the hottest battle. A thousand times more living, more beloved, since thy death than during the days of thy pilgrimage here below, thou wilt become so completely the corner-stone of humanity, that to tear thy name from the record of this world would be to disturb its very foundations. Henceforth men shall draw no boundary between thee and God. Do thou, who hast completely vanquished death, take possession of thy kingdom, whither, by the royal road thou hast pointed out, long generations of adorers shall follow thee!" (Ernest Renan, *Life of Jesus*, pp. 395-396).

IX.

The Symbolism of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Mark 15: 16-41.

Text.—"And they clothe him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it on him . . ." Mark 15: 17.

PORTENTS BY WHICH significant events are foreshadowed have been described by Shakespeare as follows:

"O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks; and I have seen
Th' ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,
To be exalted with the threatening clouds;
But never till tonight, never till now
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
A common slave—you know him well by sight—
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches joined; and yet his hand,
Not sensible of fire, remained unscorched.
Besides—I ha' not since put up my sword—
Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glared upon me and went surly by,
Without annoying me. And there were drawn
Upon a heap an hundred ghastly women,
Transformed with their fear, who swore they saw
Men, all in fire, walk up and down the streets.
And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noonday upon the marketplace.
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say,
'These are their reasons—they are natural.'
For I believe they are portentous things
Unto the climate that they point upon."

—*Julius Caesar*, Act I., Scene ii.

There is nothing, however, which smacks of superstition in connection with the types, metaphors, symbols and prophecies of divine revelation. The symbolism of various articles and incidents which figured in the crucifixion of our Lord is especially significant.

1. *The crown of thorns* (Matt. 27: 29, Mark 15: 17) brought out "the ingenuity and wantonness of cruelty." It was also divinely intended to be a symbol of the *curse of sin* (Gen. 3: 17-19).

(1) "When Adam and Eve were driven from the garden into the bleak and toilsome world, their doom was that the ground should bring forth to them thorns and thistles. Thorns were the sign of the curse; that is, of their banishment from God's presence and of all the sad and painful consequences following therefrom. And does not the thorn, staring from the naked bough of winter in threatening ugliness, lurking beneath the leaves or flowers of summer to wound the approaching hand, tearing the clothes or the flesh of the traveller who tries to make his way through the thicket, burning in the flesh where it has sunk, fitly stand for that side of life which we associate with sin—the side of care, fret, pain, disappointment, disease and death? In a word, it symbolizes the curse. But it was the mission of Christ to bear the curse; and, as He lifted it on His own head, He took it off the world. He bore our sins and carried our sorrow" (Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 98).

(2) The fact of sin is a matter of everyday observation and experience. Even so 'avowed a "liberalist" as Dr. Shailer Mathews has written: "Sin is not mistaken thinking. It is actual degeneracy of personality, because men hate instead of loving, are acquisitive instead of just. It cannot be overcome by good advice any more than disease can be cured by written prescriptions. There must be actual readjustment of life, both individual and social" (*The Faith of Modernism*, p. 100). To this I would add: This readjustment of life can come to the individual only through what is known in scripture as the new birth, or regeneration (John 3: 3-5; Titus 3: 5).

(3) "Sin is to life what the poison is to the fountain whose waters are poisoned thereby. . . . Every Christian teacher knows that all aberration in moral conduct is determined by the inner spiritual twist of the soul. . . . Sin originates in man himself. Temptation arises when we are drawn away by our own desires. Temptation becomes sin when desire is yielded to. Sin produces death when it is fullgrown. Sin entered the world, and death through sin." "The experience of reconciliation is not enough. Redemption must be added. Reconciliation first means new relation to God on the basis of the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ. Redemption is the realization by man of God's relation to him in Christ Jesus. . . . Sins are never forgiven until sin is covered. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not charging us with our sins.' 'Him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him.' First, reconciling the world unto Himself in Christ; that is, correcting a wrong relation. Second, not charging us with our sins: that is the result of such relation" (Dr. J. C. Massee, *Ten Greatest Christian Doctrines*, pp. 70-72). "Religion is the perpetual realization of God; the spiritualization of daily life. Christ would not pray that His disciples be taken from the world, but that they might be sanctified in the world, working each at daily trivial tasks, to the end that His kingdom should

come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven; aiming to make

‘Our common daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine.’”

(Edwin E. Slosson, *Sermons of a Chemist*, pp. 28-29.)

- (4) “One ship drives east, another west,
By the self-same winds that blow;
‘Tis the set of the sails, and not the gales
That determines the way they go.

“As the ways of ships, so the ways of men,
As they journey along through life;
‘Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal,
And not the calm or the strife.”

—Selected.

- (5) “The soul alone, like a neglected harp,
Grows out of tune, and needs a hand divine;
Dwell Thou within it; tune and touch the cords,
Till every note and string shall answer Thine.
Abide in me! There have been moments pure
When I have seen Thy face and felt Thy power;
Then evil lost its grasp, and passion hushed,
Pulsed in the divine enchantment of the hour.”

—Harriet Beecher Stowe.

(6) Your sins and mine crucified Jesus. He “bare our sins in His body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2: 24). You and I, with all mankind, helped to press down upon His brow that crown of thorns, helped to fill that bitter cup of suffering which He drank, just as truly as did those who perpetrated His actual crucifixion! He is saying to us now:

“I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave My life for thee,
What hast thou given for Me?

“My Father's house of light—
My glory-circled throne
I left for earthly night,
For wanderings sad and lone.
I left, I left it all for thee,
Hast thou left aught for Me?

“I suffered much for thee,
More than thy tongue can tell,
Of bitterest agony,

To rescue thee from hell.
I've borne, I've borne it all for thee,
What has thou borne for Me?

"And I have brought to thee,
Down from My home above,
Salvation full and free,
My pardon and My love.
I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee,
What hast thou brought to Me?"

—Frances R. Havergal.

2. *The daughters of Jerusalem* (Luke 23: 27-31). While this incident was not, strictly speaking, symbolic, it was prophetic of that mourning which would attend the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and his Roman legions, A.D. 70. It has some important lessons for us, too:

"These daughters of Jerusalem are the sisters of today who see in the Cross only a matter for sentimental emotion. They weep over the Cross much as a woman today would weep over a pathetic novel. Such tears are idle. They have no moral value. They lead to no moral reformation. As such they are rejected by Christ. What in the daughters of Jerusalem was natural and praiseworthy, is worthless today, and almost worse than worthless in the clearer light of the Resurrection. To the believing soul the Cross is more than a theme for song and a subject for tears. And if it is right and proper to sing softly, 'He was despised and rejected of men,' the Messiah should always end with a 'Hallelujah chorus;' for

'The head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now.'

Again: "The tears that Jesus would have us shed as we stand in thought beneath His Cross must be deeper than those of pity; they must be tears of conviction; they must be tears of the conscience" (W. Mackintosh Mackay, *Bible Types of Modern Women*, pp. 164-165).

3. *The seamless tunic* (John 19: 23).

(1) The coat of Jesus referred to here was evidently that article of clothing worn next the body by Oriental peoples, known as a tunic. The tunic was usually made by stitching together two pieces of linen cloth, with the seams running down the sides. This worn by the Master was therefore an unusual garment. How He came to possess it, we do not know; probably it was a gift from some of His well-to-do friends, more than likely from one of the women who were constantly caring for His needs.

(2) Josephus tells us that the high priest wore a seamless tunic, but there is no evidence in scripture that he did so in obedience to a divine command. It may be, however, that Je-

Jesus' seamless tunic was intended to be additional evidence that He is indeed our eternal High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, not a high priest on earth, but in heaven. And it was undoubtedly intended to be symbolical of that unbroken purity and holiness which He maintained unto the end. We read in Rev. 19: 8 that "fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints," i.e., an emblem of righteousness and holiness. It follows therefore, in view of Jesus' perfect example and life, that He should have been clothed in just such a garment as He is said to have worn next His precious undefiled body.

4. *The rent veil* (Matt. 27: 51, Mark 15: 38, Luke 23: 45).

(1) The rending of the Partition Veil of the Temple, the heavy curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was a striking phenomenon whose divine import is unusually clear and significant. (a) It betokened the exodus of the Deity from the Temple whose dispensation was ended. This Temple, despite its antiquity and grandeur was of the earth, earthly; and was now to give way to that more glorious spiritual temple, the church, the body of Christ (Eph. 2: 21-22). (b) It signified to both Jew and Gentile that the reign of the gods was over and that men need no longer go to Jerusalem to worship the true and living God (John 4: 20-24, Acts 17: 24-28). (c) It meant, too, that the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by our Lord's death on the Cross (Eph. 2: 14-18). (d) It signified the rejection of the Jewish nation and the forfeiture of its standing and election in the plan of God. The rabble had shouted: "His blood be on us, and on our children." God certainly took them at their word. From that day to this, the Jew has been a wanderer on the face of the earth, without a flag that he could call his own; the world's "man without a country." He has been the victim of persecution, massacre, and pogrom in almost every nation on the face of the globe. He has paid dearly for His rejection of the true Messiah—and still he remains as rebellious and stiff-necked as ever (Acts 7: 51-53). (e) It symbolized the point of cleavage between the old covenant and the new, the former having been abrogated at the same time the latter was ratified, at the death of Christ (Heb. 8: 6-13, Col. 2: 14-15). (f) Finally, it signified that the door into heaven itself was now open to all mankind on the terms of the gospel; that henceforth, on condition of faith, repentance and obedience, all might enjoy remission of sins, unhindered access to God without the mediating services of an earthly priesthood, and "an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith;" also that at death the spirits of the redeemed should without delay be received up into heaven, the Holiest of Holies; and that all these blessings and privileges were now made possible through "the new and living way" provided by our Lord and consecrated by Him through the veil of His flesh (Heb. 9: 1-28, 10: 19-22).

(2) The story is told that Frederick the Great of Prussia, who was inclined to be skeptical, once said to a leading minister of his realm: "Reverend sir, what is the most convincing evidence in your opinion of the divine origin and authority of the Scriptures?" "Sire," replied the clergyman without a moment's hesitation, "the history of the Jewish people." How true! History proves beyond any reasonable doubt that almost every prediction recorded in the Bible pertaining to the Jewish nation has been fulfilled!

(3) The rent veil meant, says Dr. Stalker, "as is set forth in the noble argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the system of ceremonies and intermediaries by which under the Old Testament the worshiper might approach God and yet was kept at a distance from Him, had been swept away. The heart of God is now fully revealed, and it is a heart of love; and, at the same time, the heart of man, liberated by the sacrifice of Christ from the conscience of sin, as it could never have been by the offering of bulls and goats, can joyfully venture into the divine presence, and go out and in with the freedom of a child" (*Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, p. 285).

5. *The spear-pierced side* (John 19: 34).

Here we have a striking antitype. Paul tells us, in Rom. 5: 14, that Adam, the first man and head of the old fleshly creation, was a *figure* (type) of "him that was to come," i.e., of Christ, the head of the new spiritual creation (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 45-49). In like manner, Eve, the bride of Adam, was typical of the Church, the Bride of the Redeemer (Eph. 5: 22-33, Gal. 4: 26. etc); and the relationship between Adam and Eve was intended to be typical of the spiritual intimacy and communion that should prevail between Christ and His church. It seems, moreover, that the manner of Eve's creation was divinely ordained to be typical of the creation and construction of the church. We read that God caused "a deep sleep" to fall upon Adam, during which He took out of the Man the material of which He made the Woman, and brought her unto the Man; so, carrying out the analogy, while Jesus slept "the deep sleep" of death on the Cross, our heavenly Father, through human instrumentality of course, removed from His precious body the two elements out of which He has created and built the church, the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21: 2-10). These two elements were *blood* and *water*. It is the blood of Christ, and that alone, that cleanses us from the guilt of sin; there is no other remedy for sin (1 John 1: 7, 5: 8). But the blood of Jesus flowed when He died; therefore the only place where we can come under that precious blood and appropriate unto our own souls its cleansing efficacy is in the grave of water, wherein we literally die to sin, if believing penitents, and arise to walk in newness of life and relationship (Rom. 6: 1-11; Col. 2: 10-12). This grave of water is of course the ordinance of Christian baptism: and the penitent believer is through baptism inducted into Christ and into the body of Christ at one and the same

time (Gal. 3: 27). This is a striking analogy, and one that bears the unmistakable impress of divine origin and inspiration.

Conclusion: The Cross itself is God's eternal and imperishable symbol of sacrificial love.

(1) "They borrowed a bed to lay his head
When Christ the Lord came down;
They borrowed the ass in the mountain pass
For him to ride to town;
But the crown that he wore and the cross that he bore
Were his own—
The cross was his own!

"He borrowed the bread when the crowd He fed
On the grassy mountainside;
He borrowed the dish of broken fish
With which he was satisfied;
But the crown that he wore and the cross that he bore
Were his own—
The cross was his own!

"He borrowed the ship in which to sit
To teach the multitude;
He borrowed a nest in which to rest—
He had never a home so rude;
But the crown that he wore and the cross that he bore
Were his own—
The cross was his own!

"He borrowed a room on his way to the tomb
The Passover Lamb to eat;
They borrowed a cave for him a grave;
They borrowed a winding sheet;
But the crown that he wore and the cross that he bore
Were his own—
The cross was his own!"

—"L. M. N."

(2) Commenting on the above poem, Dr. E. Stanley Jones has written: "It is beautiful poetry, and I love it as such; but I wonder—I wonder!—if there was anything more completely *not* his own than that cross. The bed, the ass, the bread, the dish of broken fish, the ship, the nest, the cave—they were all his. Was he not the giver of all life? But this cross—this cross—it was not his. He had done nothing to deserve it. It was not his! *It was yours and mine!*" (*The Christ of Every Road*, pp. 78-79).

(3) The world calls to pleasure, comfort and luxury. The Cross calls to sacrifice. The world says: "Make all the money you can." "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die." But the Cross says:

"Through death comes life: through loss comes gain,
The smile for the tear, and the joy for the pain."

The message of the Cross is that all life springs out of death. The toiler at his task, the soldier on the battlefield, the mother in the birth hour, the flowers that bloom and die on the coffin lid—all tell the same story.

"The daisy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat."

It has been suggested that the very limestone hill on which the Cross of Christ was upraised had been hardened and compacted together through the death of countless living creatures, enforcing the truth that

"No life is but by death,
Something's expiring everywhere,
To give some other breath."

The Cross stands as the eternal witness to the normalcy of sacrifice in a correct program of life, that the story of human progress has been written in footprints of blood. The burdens of the world are borne by the sons and daughters of sacrifice. True wealth goes through the world on the shoulders of poverty. In fact the very foundations of both temporal and spiritual life are deeply laid in sacrifice. Love is the last and greatest word.

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of love,
And feed his sacred flame."

(4) The challenge of the Cross is a challenge to personal purity, holy living, sacrificial service, and self-denial in the interest of others. "Ever and always," G. A. Studdert-Kennedy has written, "I can see set up above this world of ours a huge and towering cross with great arms outstretched East and West, from the rising to the setting of the sun; and on that cross my God still hangs and calls on all brave men and women to come out, and share His sorrow and help save the world."

"Red with His blood the better day is dawning,
Pierced by His pain the storm-clouds roll apart;
Rings o'er the earth the message of the morning,
Still on the Cross the Savior bares His heart."

"Passionate and low the voice of God is pleading,
Pleading with men to arm them for the fight;
See how those Hands majestically bleeding,
Call us to rout the armies of the night."

(5) The Cross is central: (a) in *redemption*, (b) in *true religion*, (c) in *history*, and (d) in *spiritual experience*. The very mention of it casts over the human heart the mystic spell

of adoring worship; the vision of it has rewritten the history of man upon the earth; and the touch of it transmutes into beauty and glory everything with which it comes in contact. In the midst of life we sing:

"Nearer the cross, my heart can say,
I am coming nearer;
Nearer the cross from day to day,
I am coming nearer;
Nearer the cross where Jesus died,
Nearer the fountain's crimson tide,
Nearer my Savior's wounded side,
I am coming nearer."

And in the hour of death our prayer is this:

"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:
In life, in death, O Lord, abide in me."

(6) "The sin-stricken world must needs have far more than teaching by word or example for its healing. Should any of our own hearts fail to thrill in response to the truth, let the experiences in the city missions bear witness to it. Here is a man, drunken, diseased, hopeless. Tell him about the ten commandments, and hear him exclaim, 'I have broken every one of them!' Read to him the Sermon on the Mount, and it but adds to his despair. There is no Gospel here. But now assure him of the love of the Savior; tell him that He died for him; that all the guilty past has been atoned for, and that the One who died stands ready to receive, forgive, give strength for a new life, and then witness the miracle of a soul re-born, rejoicing at the foot of the Cross. Countless are the thousands who have known this experience, and who on earth or in heaven sing their praises to the Lamb who was slain. The biography of John Vine Hall is but one of the many stories of the rescue of a wreck. He became the author of *The Sinner's Friend*, a little book which printed in many languages and editions was the means of saving countless sinners. How often this man, father of Newman Hall, would exclaim, 'Without the blood of Christ I feel assured I can never be saved, and I look on it with a thrill of delight.' Among the last words of General S. C. Armstrong were these:

'Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.'

(Dr. C. DeW. Brower, *Christian Herald*, March 21, 1925).

(7) The Cross is the eternal symbol of sacrificial suffering. "Sienkiewicz has portrayed an immortal picture of the sufferings of the early Christians in his masterpiece, *Quo Vadis*. The impressions made upon the venomous and depraved old Chilo by the marvelous fashion in which the multitudes of Christians met death is one of the most thrilling things in

the book. How his superstitious terror was stirred! How the flames of an unspeakable hell of remorse burned his soul to a cinder! When all hope had vanished, he at last can fling the horrible burden of treachery from his soul by denouncing Nero as the real incendiary before the multitudes and then dying with these whom he has wronged. Beautiful as the spirit of Christ is the fashion in which the Apostle Paul is represented as seeking out the broken old Greek and leading him to yield himself to Christ. And then behold how Chilo dies! It is a good thing in these dull, drab days of seeking the Christ in the course of least resistance, instead of the way of the cross, to catch the vision of "*Quo Vadis, Domine?*" (Dr. R. C. Foster, *Christian Standard*, January 26, 1924).

(8) Once upon a time a mother and her child sat together, when suddenly the child happened to catch sight of a scar upon her mother's white arm. "Oh, mother," said the little one, "what a dreadful scar! How did it ever get there?" The mother replied, "Come here, my child, and I'll tell you the story. One day when you were very small, scarcely more than a baby, you stumbled and fell across the hearth towards the fire. You were in great danger. I happened to see it just in time to run forward and put this arm between the fire and you, and I lifted you up unharmed. But the fire burned my arm and left this scar." "You dear, dear mother," said the little one in tears, "let me kiss and kiss that wound!" So our Lord's visage was marred—for us! He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and with His stripes we are healed!

(9)

"An angel from the heavenly choir,
Came down the shining way;
Gave me a string from his own lyre
That I might sing and play.

"What shall I sing, Celestial One,
On earth, in heaven above?"
'Join with the host before the Throne,
And sing the Savior's love.'"

—Edith Houghton Buell.

X.

The Philosophy of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Matt. 16: 21-28.

Text.—"For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." Matt. 16: 25.

THE FIRST of the three great facts of the gospel is that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15: 3). The spirit of Christianity is the spirit of the Cross, and the very genius of the Christian message is the philosophy of the Cross (1 Cor. 2: 2).

In order to impress these fundamental truths on the minds of His people with such recurring frequency they should never lose sight of them, our Lord has seen fit to erect in the very heart and center of His church an institution which witnesses to this philosophy. This institution is known as "the communion of the body and of the blood of Christ" (Matt. 26: 29, 1 Cor. 10: 16).

What, then, is the philosophy of the Cross? In answer to this question, let us consider three general propositions as follows:

1. *The inadequacy of human philosophy.* The Apostle Paul writes eloquently on this subject in 1 Cor. 1: 18-25 and 1 Cor. 2: 1-5. Human philosophy represents the oft-repeated attempt to apprehend Infinity, and to explain the mysteries of Personality, through the instrumentality of the human mind alone, which, says the Apostle, cannot be done (1 Cor. 1: 21). Philosophy has been defined as "the search of a blind man in a dark cellar for a black cat that isn't there." Human philosophy is speculation and nothing more; it has never been found adequate to satisfy the aspirations of the soul. We cannot apprehend Infinity, nor explain origins, through any process of the finite intelligence alone; hence we can know God only as He has revealed Himself to us (Deut. 29: 29, Job 11: 7).

(1) The big thing in Plato's philosophy was *Idea*, "an immaterial pattern existing in the mind of which the individual objects are imperfect copies." It must be remembered, however, that only *finite* ideas can originate in *finite* minds, and that infinite ideas emanate only from Infinity.

(a) The thesis of so-called Modernism is that all religion is the consequence of a long evolutionary process, rather than of divine revelation; that man's enlarging ideas of Deity arose out of a consciousness of his own needs and were, therefore, concepts of his own mind. In other words, God did not

create man in His own image, but man created God in his own imagination. This theory, I claim, is contrary to the facts of observation. Experience teaches that man if left to his own devices and resources will go backward spiritually rather than forward; that the only true incentive to moral and spiritual progress is not a *pushing* power from within man, but a *pulling* power from without.

(b) Lewis Browne, formerly a rabbi, in his book entitled *This Believing World*, has boldly attempted to describe the forward steps in this alleged development of religious concepts and modes of worship, as follows: (1) *Animism*, "the dawn of the idea of spirit," or the tendency to see souls in things; (2) *Shamanism*, primitive man's belief that he could exploit the power of a spirit; (3) *Fetishism*, the worship of an inanimate object because it was thought to be the residence of a spirit; (4) *Tabooism*, or the prohibition of certain objects and actions on the ground that they were the abode of, or inspired by, evil spirits; (5) *Sacerdotalism*, or the setting aside of a priestly order to mediate between the spirits and man. These various beliefs finally synthesized, he claims, to produce religion. "Religion," he concludes, "was the boot-strap by which man raised himself out of savagery" (p. 35). This, like nine-tenths of the religious literature turned loose on the book-shelves of today is sheer speculation, and mostly nonsense. It is far more reasonable to think that these things—animism, fetishism, tabooism, and all forms of idolatry, in fact—are evidences of man's degeneracy, as Paul argues in Romans 1: 18-32, rather than of his alleged "ascent" from a state of brutishness into that which is called civilization.

(c) The fact remains that God's nature, attributes and works, are not matters to be apprehended by any intuitive process, but matters that can be made known to us only by revelation from the Deity Himself; and that, without this revelation as recorded in the Scriptures, the race would be no more advanced morally and spiritually than it was three or four thousand years ago.

(2) The big thing in the philosophy of Socrates was *Self-knowledge*. To this we object that sincere introspection, resulting in knowledge of self, merely serves to reveal to every candid person the inherent depravity of man and to intensify his consciousness of his own sins and of his need of a Savior. The voice of personal experience is that "all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23).

(3) The big thing in Kant's philosophy is *Reason*. Kant built on the Aristotelian foundation of *Logic*. But reason is an imperfect and most uncertain quantity, depending largely upon training and perception for its conclusions, and manifesting none of the attributes of perfect authority such as perfect wisdom, perfect love and perfect justice. Kant makes much of what he calls "pure reason," a thing which is impossible apart from perfect personality. Man has certainly demonstrated himself to be anything but perfect. Reason may lead

one man to do a certain thing, but lead another man to take an entirely different course. If the natural man were endowed with pure reason he would not be making so many failures, nor would there be so much confusion in every realm in which he holds dominion.

(4) The German philosophers, particularly Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, glorified *Will*, under such terms as "the Will to Live," "the Will to Reproduce," "the Will to Power," etc. Nietzsche, says Durant, "at eighteen lost his faith in the God of his fathers, and spent the remainder of his life looking for a new deity; he thought he found one in the Superman" (*The Story of Philosophy*, p. 438). It was this soulless philosophy which resulted quite naturally in the Prussian military system and which ultimately drenched the earth in blood.

(5) How inadequate and how futile all this speculation! What human being would turn to philosophy for salvation in life, or for comfort and hope in the hour of death!

2. *The inadequacy of science.*

(1) Philosophy deals with origins and with ultimate realities. Science deals with methods and processes. Science is entirely out of place attempting to solve the problem of beginnings.

(2) Science is an uncertain quantity. It changes with every decade. What was considered good science yesterday may be discarded as utterly worthless tomorrow. For example, the law of causality has long been considered by scientists as fundamental and unshakable; today, since the discoveries of Einstein, it is being openly challenged by the so-called "uncertainty principle."

(3) Science, like philosophy, is more or less relative and indeterminate in its nomenclature. As Rabbi Hillel Silver says, *Religion in a Changing World*, the scientific concepts of "matter, energy, time, space, the atom, etc., are not truth, but only artifices of thought, convenient summaries, not realities." The only realities in this changing world, he contends rightly, are "the reality of God, the reality of personality, the reality of truth, beauty and goodness."

(4) Science, like religion, rests on *faith*. It is just as easy to believe in an angel as in an atom.

3. *The superlative excellence of the philosophy of the Cross.* It is complete and perfect, reality in itself, because it meets every test of human experience, every need of which the soul is cognizant.

(1) The philosophy of the Cross is *moral*. (a) It presents Love as the noblest motivating principle back of all human conduct. *Love for God* is the first and greatest commandment, says Jesus, which if allowed to fructify in our hearts will produce those fruits essential to true righteousness (Matt. 22: 37-38). Love for God militates against such sins as worldliness, idolatry, blasphemy, profanity, covetousness, and the like; and if universally cherished and practiced would banish these sins from the earth. Love for one another is the second

greatest commandment of the Law (Matt. 22: 39). This form of love if universally practiced would eradicate such sins as murder, theft, fornication, adultery, enmities, jealousy, divisions, factions, war; in fact all sins classified in the category of "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 19-21). These forms of love were both perfectly exemplified in the death of Jesus on the Cross. His death was at one and the same time a demonstration of perfect obedience to the will of the Father and a manifestation of perfect love for mankind. (b) It reveals and demonstrates the love of God for man (John 3: 16). As the essential principle of sin is *selfishness*, so that of righteousness is *unselfishness*. Love is measured in terms of *sacrifice*. We do not truly love until we shall have given up our most treasured gifts and possessions for the benefit of those whom we love. There has been only one *supreme sacrifice* in all history because it was a sacrifice of deity as well as of humanity (John 15: 12-13). (c) It seeks to promote love, among the household of faith, particularly; and among all men, generally (1 John 4: 7-12, Luke 2: 14, 1 Cor. 13). (d) It presents love as the source and cause of all true righteousness and holiness. The "righteousness of the Pharisees" was a dead ritualism—nothing but "sounding brass" and "clanging cymbal," because it was inspired not by love, but by a hypocritical desire to appear respectable in the eyes of their fellows (Matt. 5: 20). The "righteousness which is of faith" is, on the other hand, that doing right which flows out of a heart filled with love for God and for our fellow-men (Matt. 5: 6, Rom. 14: 17).

(2) The philosophy of the cross is also *spiritual*. It transcends the realm of ordinary morality and becomes the very heart and soul of true religion. (a) From the *judicial* point of view, the Atonement provided by our Lord in His death on the Cross, makes it possible for man to be redeemed from the curse of the law and to receive the pardon of his sins (Gal. 3: 13, Rev. 22: 3). Man, in the beginning, trampled under foot a *divine* law, making it necessary that the majesty of that law be sustained by a *divine* offering. Man had nothing he could offer that would atone for the violation of a divine law, and was therefore helpless. Hence, what man was unable to do for himself, God did for him. The Godhead provided a divine offering to sustain the majesty of the divine law. The Father gave His Son, the Son gave His life, in order to provide this necessary Atonement, the benefits of which may be appropriated by man through *faith* (Rom. 3: 24, 8: 3). From the legal point of view, this process is known as *justification* (Rom. 5: 1), in the sense that the claims of justice are fully satisfied. (b) From the *personal* point of view, the Atonement provided by our Lord on the Cross makes *reconciliation* possible. It serves to reconcile God to man, and man to God. It achieves a double purpose: that of sustaining the majesty of the law violated, and also that of overcoming the rebellion in man's heart. No human being can seriously contemplate Calvary without realizing that all men are the objects of God's redeeming love. The

message of the Cross is fundamentally that of *reconciliation* (Eph. 2: 16, Col. 1: 20, 2 Cor. 5: 18, Rom. 5: 10-11). (c) The philosophy of the Cross is the essence of true religion. The essential principle of religion is *reconciliation*. Moreover, religion manifests itself in *worship*. True worship, says Jesus, is: *first*, communion of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit (John 4: 24); *second*, such communion according to the truth, i.e., on the terms and conditions laid down by God in His revealed Word of truth (Acts 2: 38, 42). In the light of these truths, then, Christianity becomes the one and only religion known to mankind. Such expressions as "comparative religions," "ethnic religions," "the religions of mankind," "natural religion," and the like, are, technically speaking, misnomers. Confucianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, etc., are in reality systems of philosophy. Christianity is the only religion, because it is the only system which makes possible reconciliation between creature and Creator (John 14: 6).

Conclusions:

1. The philosophy of the Cross transcends all human philosophy as the heavens transcend the earth.

"I sought from Socrates the sage,
Whose thoughts will live through every age,
A motto to direct my life,
A hero make me in the strife—
And Socrates said, 'Know thyself.'

"To know myself did not suffice
To make me useful, true and wise;
I sought Aurelius, good and great,
Wise ruler of the Roman state—
Aurelius said, 'Control thyself.'

"O Nazarene, Thou who didst give
Thy life that man mightst fully live,
What message didst Thou leave for me,
That I might truly follow Thee?
The Savior says, 'Deny thyself.'"

Self-denial, sacrifice, cross-bearing, motivated by love, is the very soul of the Master's teaching (Matt. 16: 24-26). "To those who did not understand Christ's philosophy that ['He saved others: himself he cannot save'] seemed like a plausible rebuke. Counting self as center, they reasoned that if Christ could save others, He could of course save Himself. It never occurred to them that One who came to seek and to save the world must necessarily neglect Himself. His life was the price of our salvation—by His stripes we are healed. . . . At this point Christ's teachings rise far above the teachings of the uninspired. And yet, at no point is the superiority of Christ's philosophy more clearly demonstrated: 'Whosoever will

save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.' " (W. J. Bryan, *Christ and His Companions*, pp. 212-213).

2. The philosophy of the Cross has been written into our Christian hymnology. Professor J. Gresham Machen, in his book *Christianity and Liberalism*, pp. 126-128, says: "The Christian doctrine of the atonement is rooted in the Christian doctrine of the deity of Christ. The reality of an atonement for sin depends altogether upon the New Testament presentation of the Person of Christ. And even the hymns dealing with the Cross which we sing in church can be placed on an ascending scale according as they are based upon a lower or higher view of Jesus' person. At the very bottom of the scale is that familiar hymn:

'Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me.'

That is a perfectly good hymn. It means that our trials may be a discipline to bring us nearer to God. The thought is not opposed to Christianity; it is found in the New Testament. But many persons have the impression, because the word 'cross' is found in the hymn, that there is something specifically Christian about it, and that it has something to do with the gospel. This impression is entirely false. In reality, the cross that is spoken of is not the Cross of Christ, but our own cross; the verse simply means that our own crosses or trials may be a means to bring us nearer to God. It is a perfectly good thought, but certainly it is not the gospel. One can only be sorry that the people on the *Titanic* could not find a better hymn to die by than that. But there is another hymn in the hymn-book:

'In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.'

That is certainly better. It is here not our own crosses but the Cross of Christ, the actual event that took place on Calvary, that is spoken of, and that event is celebrated as the centre of all history. Certainly the Christian man can sing that hymn. But one misses even there the full Christian sense of the meaning of the Cross; the Cross is celebrated but it is not understood. It is well, therefore, that there is another hymn in our hymn-book:

'When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.'

There at last are heard the accents of true Christian feeling—'the wondrous Cross on which the Prince of Glory died.' When

we come to see that it was no mere man who suffered on Calvary but the Lord of glory, then we shall be willing to say that one drop of the precious blood of Jesus is of more value, for our own salvation and for the hope of society, than all the rivers of blood that have flowed upon the battlefields of history." "We would add to Professor Machen's three hymns a fourth," writes Dr. William Adams Brown, "which is necessary to bring out the Christian doctrine of Atonement in its completeness:

'Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me.'

This hymn, explains Dr. Brown, expresses what the Cross "may mean in the lives of individual men" as "Jesus' summons to the sacrificial life" (*Beliefs That Matter*, pp. 139-142).

3. The philosophy of the Cross is realized in genuine Christian discipleship, the essence of which is described as "cross-bearing."

(a) "To bear the cross is to surrender our wills to the divine will. Tennyson sang: 'Our wills are ours to make them Thine.' Jesus declared: 'I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.' Of the early disciples it is written: 'No one of them said that aught of the things he possessed was his own.' In fact, he was not his own, for he had been bought with a price. Jesus had His temptations to self-indulgence as well as we, but in the garden He prayed, 'Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.' To take up our cross, therefore, is to bring every thought and word and deed in submission to the will of Christ" (Editorial, *Christian Standard*, Oct. 17, 1925). Cross-bearing, which is equivalent to self-denial, is not measured in terms of asceticism, self-torture, or monkishness, but in terms of loving obedience and sacrifice.

(b) In the words of G. A. Studdert-Kennedy:

"The cry of earth's anguish went up unto God—

"Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made,
That it love Thee the more."

"Then answered the Lord to the world He had made,
Shall I take away pain?

And with it the power of the soul to endure
Made strong by the strain?

Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart
And sacrifice high?

Will ye lose all your heroes who lift from the flame
White brows to the sky?

Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
And smiles through the loss—

Can ye spare from the lives that climb unto Mine
The Christ on His Cross?"

4. Modern "liberalism" is striving desperately to denature the philosophy of the Cross. It would have us abandon the doctrine of blood atonement, so essential to the theory and practice of true religion. In the language of the old Scotch Covenanter:

"There's nae gospel noo, lassie,
There's nae covenant blood;
There's nae altar noo, lassie,
There's nae Lamb of God.

"There's nae Chalmers noo, lassie,
There's nae good McCheyne;
And the dear, dear Cross they preached, lassie,
The dear, dear Cross is gane.

"Folks dinna want the Cross, lassie,
They've cutten down the Tree;
And naebody believes in it noo, lassie,
But fules like you and me."

5. *Are we making religion too easy?*

(1) "Receiving people into the church is not a process of administering a spiritual anaesthetic. The church is something more than a haven of rest, where the indolent, idle and tired may congregate. It is more than a house of refuge to which folks may flee from their pursuers. It is more than a safety zone in the midst of the highways of life, into which people may step to avoid the dangers of spiritual injury. It is more than an old folk's home where the spiritually defective, infirm and incompetent may find shelter and be assured against all want for time and eternity. It is not a sort of spiritual Florida to which people can migrate in order to escape the chilling blasts of a cold, unfriendly world. . . . The prevailing tendency in the present-day church is to make religion too easy. It is kept within the realm of convenience and comfort. Rarely is there a call for real sacrifice. By means of suppers, sales and pay entertainments and various ingenious devices people are tricked into giving. Through entertainments and other alluring programs an effort is made to surreptitiously inject a little religion into the unsuspecting. And when people have come into the church the greatest care is exercised to spare them; so that only a minimum of anything is asked of them. Do we need to wonder that the church is not more aggressive and victorious? It hesitates to propose a program that summons us to heroic effort, sacrifice, even the giving of blood" (J. H. Goldner, *Christian Evangelist*, Oct. 28, 1926).

(2) "What fills me with a deep disquiet about our Christianity today, both liberal and orthodox, is that it is so harmless. It is so tame, so timid, so tepid—a kind of glorified lollipop. Even if we apply it to social questions, as we talk so much of doing, there will be little result unless it has more

power in it than it has now" (Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, *Christian Herald*, March 8, 1930).

(3) "Does not the weakness of Christianity lie just here in the life of today, that we are not ready to carry our convictions out to the point of suffering? . . . It is those who are willing to take the way of love which they have seen in Jesus, and follow it to the point of a cross, who have the assurance that Christ is King. One thinks of David Livingstone moving through the jungle and meeting the barbarism of Africa with the words of the hymn singing in his soul:

'Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast.'

He describes how it gripped him, how it thrilled him and kindled his faith. But the truth is he had won the power to sing it. Christ was exalted in his experience because Christ was exalted in his obedience. He had no doubt that love was power, because he was living by it. He had no doubt that Christ would reign because he was giving Him a throne in his own life—the only throne from which He could move the world, the throne of personal sacrifice, of service to the uttermost" (Dr. James Reid, *In Touch with Christ*).

(4) When I survey this "wondrous Cross on which the Prince of Glory died," every fiber of my being cries out:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!"

"Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6: 14).

XI.

The Agony of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Matt. 27: 45-53.

Text.—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27: 46.

IT MUST BE OBVIOUS to all thinking people that a paralysis of indifference to spiritual things has taken hold of the people of our day and age. As the preacher-poet of Birmingham, England, G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, has written:

"When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a
Calvary.

They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His
wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was
cheap.

"When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed Him by,
They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;
For men have grown more tender, and they would not give
Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

"Still Jesus cried, 'Forgive them, for they know not what they
do!'

And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through
and through;

The crowd went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary."

In striking contrast with the carelessness and spiritual indifference of our times, I would have you consider the "agony of primitive Christianity":

1. *Consider the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane* (Luke 22: 44).

(1) The "cup" of which He drank contained an admixture of the following ingredients: (a) rejection by His own people; (b) betrayal by one of His own disciples; (c) denial by another; (d) treachery on the part of those in authority; (e) want of sympathy from His friends; (f) the base ingratitude of His people; (g) terrible loneliness of spirit; (h) the burden of humanity's sins; and (i) His own foreknowledge of the ignominious and excruciatingly painful form of death which He was about to suffer.

(2) "Here was incarnate God, the God-Man, submitting Himself to the punishment of sin, tasting death for every man, bearing in His own Person the inexpressible bitterness of this penal humiliation. Added to all this was the incalculable fact that 'the Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all.' The burden of the sins of mankind He bore on His sacred shoulders. 'Him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf' (2 Cor. 5: 21). What this mysterious imputation, so to speak, involved, we cannot tell; but to a being perfectly pure and holy it must have been anguish unspeakable" (W. J. Deane, *Pulpit Commentary, in loco*).

(3) "The sweat poured from all His person; but not merely the natural sweat which runs down the face of man walking in the sun, or working in the fields or raving in fever. The blood which He had promised to shed for man was shed first on the grass of the garden of Gethsemane. Great drops of blood mixed with sweat fell on the earth as a first offering of His conquered flesh. It was the beginning of liberation, almost a relief to that humanity which was the greatest burden of His expiation. Then from His lips wet with tears, wet with sweat, wet with blood, arose a new prayer: 'O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. Not my will, but thine, be done!'" (Papini, *Life of Christ*, pp. 308-309).

2. Consider the agony of Jesus on the Cross:

(For notes on our text, Matt. 27: 46, see outline, "The Seven Words from the Cross.")

3. Consider the need of this element of agony in our modern Christianity.

Does not this incident teach us that there must be an element of *agony* in our Christian experience, lacking which our souls shall miss that spiritual refinement and enrichment so necessary to the "sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord?" (Heb. 12: 14). (a) To some Christianity is only a system of dogma; to some, just a code of ethics; to some, a mental philosophy; to some, a social system. Others think of it only in terms of ritual and ceremony. Cynical "reformers" with communistic tendencies have pronounced it nothing more than a superstitious cult which dulls the senses and stifles the aspirations of the poor and downtrodden. Others think of it constructively in terms of spiritual idealism, or as a way of life. All these views fall short, however, of an exact evaluation, for the simple reason that they overlook this *essential element of agony*. (b) This great spiritual truth was made the thesis of a splendid book published some two years ago, entitled *The Agony of Christianity*, written by the Spanish philosopher and mystic, Miguel De Unamuno. "Agony," says this writer, "is from the Greek word *agonia*, signifying struggle. He agonizes who lives in a state of struggle, struggling against

life itself." Before he lays down his pen, this "Christian philosopher" bares the turmoils and conflicts of his own inner self, revealing what he calls "the agony of Christianity" as illustrated in his own spiritual experience. It is indeed a remarkable book. Nothing like it has appeared in literature since the *Confessions* of Augustine. (c) There is much in this view that runs counter to popular conceptions of the Christian religion. We are accustomed to think of our faith in terms of peace, largely because this aspect appeals to us. And we are liable, it seems, to forget that the obverse is also true; that our Christian life is oftentimes a "*wrestling* . . . not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6: 12). (d) We are also inclined to overlook the fact that there is much in the New Testament about this life of spiritual agony and conquest. For example, Matt. 10: 34-39. Certainly Jesus knew what it was to agonize. At the beginning of His ministry, when the skies were clear and all was seemingly well, He found Himself suddenly plunged into an abyss of temptation. That was a real spiritual struggle, in the Wilderness; not just a skirmish of wits, but a decisive battle between the forces of darkness and the forces of light for supremacy over His life and program. During this struggle Jesus agonized. This temptation was real. All was at stake; for Him to have faltered then would have meant the loss of everything. (e) "When men and women would follow him in an easy fashion, Jesus challenged their motives. He placed in the heart of his message the cross. The cross stands forth as the supreme example of agony and the agonizer. After the group had endeavored to make him king by force, He said unto them, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in yourselves.' Jesus meant, 'Unless ye are willing to become partakers with me in my life of utter devotion in self-sacrifice, ye have no part or lot with me.' Communion, real communion, means that, nothing less than that. To the extent that we are ready to identify our lives with the life of Christ, to that extent are we entering into the fellowship of his life. This is what Jesus meant when he said, 'If ye would become my disciples, ye must be willing to take up your cross and follow me.' The cross is placed in such a central position in Christianity that it is impossible for one to evade it and be a Christian" (A. S. Baillie, *Christian Evangelist*, Aug. 16, 1928). (f) In Gethsemane, the Wilderness struggle was reenacted on a grander scale, as the Cross threw its black shadows around Him and the pall of doom descended upon Him. How intense His agony in the Garden! How He writhed and tossed as He poured out His heart in petition to the Father, while bloody sweat fell from His face and sanctified the ground upon which He lay! We cannot plumb the depths of His suffering in Gethsemane; nor can we evaluate the significance of His triumph! (g) Paul, the greatest Christian soldier

the church has ever sent forth into battle, certainly knew what it meant to agonize. Hear him recount the persecutions he had suffered as a "bondslave" of Christ (2 Cor. 11: 23-33). His *Epistle to the Romans* has been rightly termed "the spiritual autobiography of a great soul." Who can read the seventh chapter of this epistle, in which he describes his own never-ending soul-struggle, the ceaseless conflict of the higher self against the lower, the spiritual against the carnal—the victory of the latter meaning death in all that the term implies, but that of the former meaning life eternal—without sensing him in the role of a great spiritual agonist? In depicting this inner struggle for our encouragement, he reaches the climax when he cries out, in full realization of his own helplessness: "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" And in a flash, *faith* supplies the answer to his cry and the solution for his problem: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." We know that victory ultimately perched upon his banner, because in his valedictory epistle addressed to Timothy, his young associate in gospel evangelism, penned just a short time before he marched out the Appian Way to the place of his execution, he said: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-8). (h) It might be well for us to ask ourselves right here: *Can Christianity conquer the world if it lacks this element of agony?* Obviously it cannot. It is my conviction that the very lack of this essential quality is a quite sufficient explanation of the impotence of the modern church. Our religion is too easy-going; too much a matter of respectability; too often a thing of ritual and ceremony; too frequently a "form of godliness" without the power, thereof; in some cases, just a sort of fire insurance calculated to protect the policy-holder against the burnings of hell; in brief, just "sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." The modern church has no conception of what it means to "hunger and thirst after righteousness." "The church of today is self-satisfied. It can speak of its achievements in money matters. It talks so much about budget and finance that the Spirit of the Lord is missed. There is often such a tremendous creaking of machinery that the still, small voice is unheard. What the church really needs is to have created within itself a healthy spirit of discontent. It needs to know what it is to agonize over the tragic situation which confronts it, instead of endeavoring to explain the situation by cold, logical processes, and then feeling that it can do nothing" (A. S. Baillie, *ibid*). (i) Modern Christians do not know the meaning of *sacrifice*, much less of *agony*. We may profess to have given "till it hurts," but I doubt if we have done so. We purchase radios for our homes, so that we can hear popular ser-

mons, intermingled more or less with syncopation, without going to the effort of attending church services; we buy the gasoline required to drive our high-powered automobiles over the paved highways at such terrific speed we cannot look at the beauties of nature along the way; we attend picture shows as frequently as we feel so disposed; we sit in at expensive banquets served by the Kiwanis, Rotary, or Lions club, or by some other ostensibly "civic," but actually food-consuming, organization; we spend two or three hundred dollars every summer for a vacation; then, having heaped all these luxuries and benefits upon ourselves, we give the Lord a fraction of what is left, and delude ourselves into thinking that we have made a "sacrifice!" What mockery! (j) Granting that the modern church "can speak of its achievements in money matters," it is certainly at a very low ebb in the matter of personal consecration and zeal. Personal evangelism has become almost "a lost art." I am reminded here of a story which appeared recently in a church paper. As the story went, a certain minister at the close of a Lord's Day service, made an announcement as follows: "I shall take for my subject next Lord's Day forenoon, 'The Great Flood in Genesis.'" Whereupon one of his wealthy parishioners arose in a rear pew, and said: "Brother Minister, I must ask you to excuse me, as I shall not be able to attend this service, much as I should like to do so. You see I have an engagement to play golf. However, you may put me down for a contribution of one thousand dollars to aid the suffering Genesians." This little story discloses quite clearly the pathetic condition that prevails in the modern church. Christian parents are not sufficiently interested in the spiritual welfare of their own sons and daughters to maintain the family altar. They will allow their relatives, friends, neighbors, even their own children to drift along in disobedience and sin, without making any sort of an effort to bring them to Christ! Modern Christians have lost their sense of the reality of sin, their consciousness of humanity's need of a Savior without whom the world is under divine condemnation, perishing, lost, both here and hereafter! What church-member today feels so keenly the burden of the unsaved, those living at his very own doors and going their ways eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, without any thought of God, without any feeling of sorrow for their sins, without the least concern for their souls, seemingly without any consciousness of the fact that the time is not far distant when the Omnipotent Judge will say, "Thy soul is required of thee!"—that the very contemplation of their lost condition crushes him to his knees in an abandon of intercession, while the tears stream from his eyes, even as they poured down the face of Jesus when He wept over His beloved city! Such agony is an emotion practically unknown to the rank and file of modern Christians, with whom religion is more often a matter of convenience, of profession, or of respectability, equivalent to good citizenship and no more; rather than a life of service, sacrifice

and agony! O Lord, Thy people perish everywhere through indifference and neglect! O God, send a revival; send a "wind" from Thy Paradise that it may sweep through this Valley of Dry Bones, put flesh and sinews of spiritual knowledge and strength around and upon them, and spiritual life within them; that Thy people may once more become "an exceeding great army," zealous to carry out the marching orders of the King!

XII.

The Mystery of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—1 Pet. 1: 3-12.

Text.—" . . . the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them . . . which things the angels desire to look into. . . ."
1 Pet. 1: 11-12.

GREAT IS THE MYSTERY of Godliness" (1 Tim. 3: 16).

Not all mysteries are those of the Christian faith. The things "hard to be understood" are not all in the Bible by any means. There are mysteries of the natural world that are accepted as such, even by those who would reject the Word of God because of some of its mysterious utterances. All human life is "enised in a sea of mystery," awaiting the dawning of that glorious day when the hidden things are to be revealed and the mysterious things made clear.

1. *This universe in which we live and move and have our being is a world of mystery.* We are surrounded by mysteries. We cannot explain the mystery of the air that we breathe, of the food that we eat, nor of the water that we drink.

(1) "Mysteries are those things which man does not know by his ordinary senses. Mysteries are in all spheres of God's creation. They exist in all parts of the universe. Things beyond our understanding are all about us. The mysteries outside the Bible are much greater and more numerous than those in the Bible.

"The sun is a marked feature in our observation, yet the mysteries connected with it are plentiful. What is the source of its heat? Prof. Hale says the heat is 60,000 degrees. 'How does the sun sustain such a heat?' he was asked. His reply was a smile. He does not know. Why does not the sun get cooler? Constantly giving off prodigious heat, why does it not become cooler? Who knows?

"The moon is now fifteen miles off the track. To what is due the deviations in the movements of the moon?

"Men object to the word of God because of its mysteries—why not object to the world on the same ground? Refuse the sunlight. You know nothing about it, only that you are blessed by its rays. You know issues of light but not the cause.

"Look at some of the mysteries in God's world. They are so

numerous and varied that one can only cite a case here and there. Because of an evil heart of unbelief men turn away from the word of God saying, 'It has so many mysteries.' There is the mystery of the Godhead—the Trinity. The mystery of providence and predestination. The mystery connected with death and the resurrection—who can understand them? But the natural world is constantly provoking the questions, Whence? Why? Where? And there is no answer.

"Why does chemical affinity work in different ways on different substances? The element in yellow phosphorus is an active poison, while the same element in red is harmless. What makes the difference? Peperine is a poison to keep us awake, while morphine puts to sleep, yet the chemist says these two poisons are of identical composition. The fact is that we know very little about the world of elements. . . . What is matter? We see plenty of it, yet its essential nature is unknown. What is electricity? It is still a mystery. . . . Why is a bar of steel magnetized under a shock if held in one position and not in another? Why does matter sometimes repel matter? Why do extremes of heat and cold produce similar effects? . . . What is gravity? Newton was supposed to have settled that matter. Now Einstein says Newton's ideas are wrong. He asserts that the force of gravitation so carefully worked out by Newton does not even exist. . . . The most common thing is life. But what is life? How is it communicated? Why does one person take a disease from another? . . . What is a life cell? We know very little about it. We know not the substance that composes it. Huxley called it protoplasm, and in Huxley's day we thought we knew a good deal about it. Lull, in a recent book, says: 'This protoplasm is unanalyzable. Endowed with all the highest qualities of the animal and plant, it is one of the wonders of the world.' But what it is we do not know. . . . And so I might go on. But remember, mysteries are not all in the moral and religious sphere. They are in all realms of the Creator. They should never be made a cause of our refusing the will and word of our God" (Frank S. Weston, *The Evangelical Christian*, December, 1930).

(2) Coquerel, the French author, says: "Mystery applies not only to religion but to the universe. All knowledge terminates in a mystery. All human light is lost in obscurity. All human discourse arrives at a last word, supposes and suggests another which cannot be pronounced." Prof. C. A. Younge, the astronomer, asks: "How is it that an atom of matter can attract another atom no matter how great the distance, no matter what intervening substances there may be. I cannot understand. All the explanations that have been given of it seem to me to darken counsel with words and no understanding." Thos. Edison has said: "I am as sure of Superior Intelligence which works in matter as I am of my own existence." Dr. Dendy, Professor in London University, says: "The older he grows, the more a scientist realizes how little he really knows, how much there is to learn and unlearn. He sees old beliefs slowly

crumble away and new avenues of research open up with bewildering rapidity and ever widening vista." Dr. Scofield says: "Energy and force are the expressions of an Almighty Mind." Dr. Wm. McDougall writes: "The atoms are gone: matter has resolved itself into energy; and what energy is no man can tell beyond saying, it is the possibility of change." (Quoted by F. S. Weston, *ibid.*, p. 717-718).

(3) Someone has said that modern university students are frequently "half-baked products, mentally speaking, attaching unnecessary importance to what they would describe as their own ideas." Unfortunately this indictment is, in many cases, true. Francis Bacon, the English philosopher, has covered the case of the university skeptic in these well-known words: "A little philosophy inclineth men's minds to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

(4) "Mysteries afford no excuse for unbelief. The facts of Christianity and the doctrines revealed are amply sufficient for all our needs. The mysteries are to be held, not explained. The explanation will come later. Paul wrote to Timothy to 'hold the mysteries of the faith in a pure conscience' (1 Tim. 3: 9). Why should there be in religion this element of mystery? Because we are under the limitations of mind and understanding. Mystery is in everything. We see through a glass darkly. Nothing is clearly understood. The most common things are full of mystery. You see the flower bulb slowly develop and the flower after a time appear. Why should the beautiful bloom come from the unattractive bulb? You say, 'It always does.' Yes, but why? What is the motive power that gives the development? You say again, 'The law of life and growth.' What is life? Did you ever see it? There is mystery here. I can rejoice in the sunlight, though I am as ignorant as a babe of the nature of the sun. I drink of the refreshing water and feel much better, but I do not understand why oxygen and hydrogen revive me—a spirit. I am content to know results, not causes. So in spiritual matters there is much I do not understand, but I know faith in God's Word produces the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and for the present that is enough." (F. S. Weston, *ibid.*, p. 718).

2. *These mysteries testify eloquently to the fact of God.*

(1) Both reason and intuition tell us that back of all this mystery is God. Life must have originated from antecedent Life. The architectural design of the universe points clearly to a Designer. Natural and moral law both point to a Law-giver. Love, "sweet mystery of life," points to a divine Lover. So conclusive are these evidences that belief in Deity is a universal possession.

(2) If there is a God, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, it follows that He can be known only by revelation. Had He not revealed Himself, He would be "the Divine Unknown." This revelation was given in its primitive forms

to "holy men of old," in theophany, anthropomorphism, type, symbol, metaphor and prophecy. It was consummated and perfected in Jesus Christ. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman says: "The revelation of God through Jesus Christ, and of Christ through the Church, is the center to which all human faith, hope and love will gravitate as surely as do the planets to the sun."

3. *We are not surprised, therefore, to know that Christianity has its mysteries, such as:*

(1) The mystery of the *Personality of its Founder*. (a) Foretold by the Old Testament prophets (Isa. 9: 6, 7: 14, etc.). (b) Anticipated in every forward step in the unfolding of the plan of redemption; hence Paul writes of "the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3: 3). (c) Realized in the Incarnation, described by John as the entrance of the Logos into a human body, (John 1: 14), and by Paul as "the mystery of godliness," (1 Tim. 3: 16). Jesus was the God-man, Immanuel, Incarnate Deity. To attempt to do away with this transcendent doctrine of His Person is to denature the Christian faith and reduce it to the level of a philosophy.

(2) The mystery of the *Perfect Example of Christ*. He was "Son of man" as well as "Son of God." He gave a perfect teaching, and a perfect example of that which He taught. "Had Jesus never lived," says Rousseau, "the writers of the gospels would themselves have been as great as He."

(a) Our modern era has been quite prolific in its production and exploitation of *Lives of Jesus* written for the most part by skeptically-minded men and for the purpose of discrediting the supernatural element in the gospel records. Among the earliest, and still probably the most outstanding of the works of this nature was that written by the German scholar, David Friedrich Strauss, published in 1835-36. Strauss followed closely on the heels of Reimarus, Lessing, Spinoza, Griesbach, Herder, Bahrdt, Gieseler and Eichorn; who had in turn built upon foundations previously laid by Arius, Socin, Servet, and the English Deists, John Toland, Peter Annet, and Thomas Woolston. Strauss attempted what has been called "a mythical interpretation of the gospels." Baur, a contemporary of Strauss, was the first to build up a cleavage between what he called Jewish Christianity and Non-Jewish Christianity. Following in the footsteps of Strauss and Baur came Volkmar, Weisse, Wilke, Credner, Bruno Bauer, Von der Alm, Gfrorer, Ghillany, and others; then Renan, the brilliant French writer who, though not so outspoken in his attitude of criticism of the miracles, pursued the same general tenor as those who preceded him whose names I have mentioned. Then came Ritschl with his scant regard for the historical; and later Harnack who attempted to build up an alleged wall between the "historical Jesus" and the "Jesus of the gospels." Other works of note, bearing the same general ear-marks of denial of the supernatural element in the life of Jesus and His deity in

general, were those written by Keim, H. J. Holtzmann, Weiffenbach, Baldensperger, Wrede, Schweitzer, Bousset, Wellhausen, Naumann, Pfeleiderer, Dalman, Eduard Meyer, and Oscar Holtzmann. Jewish writers on the same general theme and in similar vein were Salvador, Graetz, Montefiore, Friedlander, Geiger, and finally, Dr. Joseph Klausner. All these works are attempted purely naturalistic treatments of the life of Jesus and His mission and work.

(b) Then in recent years we have had the "Christ Myth" theory of Drews, Robertson, Smith and others. Prof. Drews boldly says: "Not the historical Jesus, but the Christ as an idea, as an ideal for the divine humanity, must henceforth be the ground for religion." According to G. Stanley Hall, "Historic Christianity" made its Christ out of "mind-stuff"—in other words, Jesus is purely an imaginary character. Many of these books read in certain sections like quotations from Mrs. Eddy's *Science and Health* and remind us of her "non-sense" world.

(c) A recent popular book is Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows*. This little volume is rhetorically flashy and in places quite dramatic. Written in typical newspaper-columnist style, it is quite interesting reading. Unfortunately, however, it abounds in misleading assumptions and inaccurate statements. Moreover, the title smacks of egotism. It would seem that the author, out of his great pity for the untold millions of earth not one of whom excepting himself has ever really known Jesus in His true character and personality, has taken it upon himself to turn on the light for the benefit of us poor mortals that we may really become acquainted with "The Man Nobody Knows;" that is, nobody but Mr. Barton. In this respect the title of the book quite resembles Mrs. Eddy's *Key to the Scriptures*. (I have often wondered why the Almighty allowed the human race to stumble along for eighteen centuries with a Book for which He failed to provide a "Key" until Mrs. Eddy appeared upon the scene. I have wondered, too, why it is that the "Key" furnished by Mrs. Eddy, now that we have it, is a thousand times less intelligible than the Scriptures themselves!) In Mr. Barton's book, Jesus is presented as "a Fine Advertiser." "It is true," writes A. S. Baillie, "that nobody else has ever found the kind of Christ Bruce Barton has discovered in the Gospels. He is a jolly, hail well-met fellow. Mr. Sinclair Lewis after reading such a book might conclude that Christ was the original Babbitt. A great booster, a fine advertiser, a member of the Kiwanis and Rotarians, a real manly man from top to bottom" (*The Christian Evangelist*, February 9, 1928).

(d) Another recent volume is Emil Ludwig's *Son of Man*, in which the author professes to "rationalize" the Character presented in the gospel records, by ignoring the supernatural occurrences related therein. In his foreword, Mr. Ludwig states that it is his purpose to deal only with Jesus and to ignore the Christ. "My aim is," he writes, "not to expound teaching with which all are familiar and of which no more

than a sketch can be interwoven with the tale, but to portray the inner life of the Prophet;" again, "to present a perfectly human man called Jesus and to avoid the so-called technical word Christ." This *was* a task, indeed, which Mr. Ludwig assumed; one that, in passing beyond the bounds of an objective treatment into the field of the inner spiritual life of Jesus, took him beyond the limits of the human intellect, as the book itself shows. Naturally this author found himself in mighty deep water, for the simple reason that any attempt to make the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth conform to purely human concepts and ideals involves a paradox which renders such an objective impossible of achievement. To try to explain a Character whose every word and deed bears the unmistakable impress of Deity, in terms of ordinary humanity and nothing more, is similar to the equally absurd attempt of many so-called "moderns" to elevate humanity up to the level of demigod or deity. As a matter of fact *it just can't be done!* Deity and humanity are of different order and rank, and while the two may be correlated in one personality, as we believe they were in the personality of Immanuel, yet the gulf between them is fixed in the sense that neither can become wholly and absolutely the other. How refreshing to turn from these uninteresting, even tiresome presentations, to such a work as Papini's *Life of Christ*, one of the most dramatic, spiritual and passionate word pictures of the Christ that has ever appeared on the literary market!

(e) The claim of the Radical Modernists that "God did not create man in His own image, but man created God in his imagination," is one that involves a mis-statement; because in their purely human efforts to apprehend or imagine God, these men must remember that they are not actually making God in *their own image*, but in the *image of their ideal*. This explains, too, the many varied presentations of the character and personality of Jesus which have appeared from as many different minds and pens throughout our modern era.

(f) It is passing strange that these attempted "de-bunkers" of the supernatural should fail to see that even if they were to succeed in "explaining away" the supernatural element in the New Testament narratives, they would still be face to face with the equally great, if not greater, mystery of *the perfect character and life of Jesus*. "The Man Christ Jesus" is a mystery equally as profound as "the Only Begotten Son of God." Goethe says: "I esteem the gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendor of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so divine a kind as only the divine could ever have manifested upon earth." Rousseau has written: "How petty are the books of philosophers compared with the gospels! Can it be that writings, at once so sublime and so simple, are the work of men? Can he whose life they tell be himself no more than a mere man?" Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, in answer to the question, "What have you to say against the theory that Jesus was

a mythical creation?" writes as follows: "Simply this, that the theory itself is a mythical creation confined to a small group of intellectual eccentrics who are regarded as negligible by practically all scholars and historians. Admitting the theory, the difficulty arises as to who invented so matchless a personality as Jesus, and placed in His mouth the teachings which have revolutioned the race. You can carve out of the Gospels a dozen sublime figures and call them Jesus. But as extreme liberals like Renan, Wellhausen, Strauss, and Loisy have demonstrated, these imaginative reconstructions play no part in our interpretations of Jesus or in His actual work for the world."

(3) *The mystery of the Cross*, otherwise known as the Atonement, that mystery which the angels desired to look into (1 Pet. 1: 11, 12). This great mystery was revealed in prophetic imagery to Isaiah whose import he himself did not understand (Isa. 53: 1-11). Jesus explains this mystery in terms of *attraction* (John 12: 32); John explains it in terms of vicarious *sacrifice* (1 John 4: 7-11); Paul, in terms of *reconciliation* (2 Cor. 5: 18, 19); Peter, in terms of *expiation* (1 Pet. 2: 24); and the writer of Hebrews, in terms of *intercession* (Heb. 2: 17, 18). Whatever one's personal theory of the Atonement may be, the essential truth of the matter is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3); and that is sufficient for the man of faith. "That God was in some true sense a sharer in Christ's suffering has been the faith of the church from the first. This is the fixed point in the mystery we call the Atonement, the basic fact to which faith witnesses, the place from which Fundamentalist and Modernist alike start. Modern theologians accept the fact of the Atonement. They try to explain it, not to explain it away. Explain it, did I say? Rather than to render it less unintelligible. Wherever we touch God, we touch mystery. Between the human and the divine there hangs a curtain which can never be lifted. The most we can hope is to use human analogies to suggest what goes on behind the veil. The older Protestant theologians used the analogy of law and penalty to interpret the cross. They thought of Jesus as our substitute, paying the penalty required of us by divine justice. Today, we feel that no merely legal phraseology can do justice to what Jesus experienced. If we must choose, we find personal analogies more helpful, such as that of father and child or of friend and friend. But in the one case as in the other, we are dealing with symbols suggesting more than they can express. The reality to which the symbol points is the fact that no good thing can be had without cost, and the more precious a thing is, the more it costs. There is forgiveness of sin, but not without a price. And the price of forgiveness is vicarious suffering" (William Adams Brown, *Beliefs That Matter*, pp. 141, 142).

"Under the Eastern sky,
Amid a rabble's cry,
A Man went forth to die
For me.

"Thorn-crowned His blessed head,
Blood-stained His every tread,
Cross-laden, on He sped,
For me.

"Pierced glow His hands and feet,
Three hours o'er Him beat
Fierce rays of noontide heat
For me.

"Thus wert Thou made all mine;
Lord, make me wholly Thine;
Grant grace and strength divine
For me.

"In thought and word and deed
Thy will to do. Oh, lead
My soul, e'en though it bleed,
To Thee!"

—Selected.

(4) The mystery of *Personal Regeneration*. "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3-5). "Buried therefore with him through baptism into death . . . so also we might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 4). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2: 12). "A new creature" (Gal. 6: 15). "The new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4: 24). "Have put on the new man" (Col. 3: 10). "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 20). "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1: 27). "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17). "A holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are also builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 21, 22). "He that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life" (John 3: 36). "He that hath the Son hath the life" (1 John 5: 12, etc., etc.).

(5) The mystery of *Resurrection and Immortality* (1 Cor. 15). Materialistic philosophy rejects the doctrine of immortality because it is mysterious. But such concepts as "reabsorption into the cosmos," "Nirvana," "unknowingness," "disembodied spirits" (a doctrine equivalent to "nothing floating around in nothingness")—all these are expressions a thousand times more mysterious than the Scripture doctrine of the "redemption of

the body." Not only are they mysterious, but meaningless and absurd. They are not only unexplainable, but they themselves explain nothing. How much nobler, more intelligible and more satisfying the ideal of personal, individual immortality as taught in the New Testament Scriptures.

4. *Our conclusion is that the supernatural element is essential to true religion.*

(1) These mysteries prove that the vital truths of Christianity transcend the scope of human reason *per se*. These essential truths have been revealed to spiritually-minded men in spiritual terms (1 Cor. 2: 11-15), and are to be "spiritually discerned." Atheists, agnostics, materialists, and cynics cannot be expected to understand or appreciate these "mysteries of the faith," because in the blindness and impenitence of their hearts they are incapable of so doing. They are like the old farmer who, leaning over a rail fence, was watching a distinguished artist paint a beautiful landscape. The old man looked on silently for a while. Finally, "I can't see," he drawled, "anything so wonderful in that picture." To his poor soul, with its limited sense of artistic appreciation, there was nothing there but lines and daubs, paints and brushes. The artist looked at him for a moment, then replied compassionately, "Wouldn't it be wonderful, though, if you could!"

(2) We cannot fully understand all these mysteries now because we look through a mirror darkly. Those who seek to make Christianity strictly "rational" by attempting to reduce it to a system of naturalism are acting in the highest degree irrationally. Obviously the mysteries of the Christian faith "spring naturally from the distance between God and man," from the gulf between deity and humanity (Job 11: 7-8). Attacks upon the supernatural may attract those who are shallow and superficial in their thinking; but the reverent and spiritually-minded know that if these attacks were to succeed, and become universal in their sway, the churches would empty themselves and religion would be destroyed. The weakness of so-called "liberalism," "modernism," and "humanism" lies in their *negations*. They have nothing to offer to take the place of the concepts and ideals they seek to destroy. Religion without this essential element of mystery which attaches to the spiritual realm, and inheres in spiritual personality and nomenclature, would not be religion at all.

(3) Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of New York City was quoted as saying the following, some years ago, to his congregation of more than two thousand members: "It may shock you to hear me, a preacher, say that I would be glad to have the spirit of sportsmanship take the place of religion. Yes, I mean it. The supernatural morality of old is almost completely gone and I do not feel any great loss. As the world changes, so must morality change." Dr. B. A. Abbott, Editor of *The Christian Evangelist*, St. Louis, Mo., comments as

follows on Dr. Wise's pronouncement: 'Suppose the brilliant rabbi were to meet a cave man some Sunday morning. He would see a man unhampered by supernatural restraints and experience, and find out that the natural man, as well as nature, is 'red of tooth and claw,' and that this cave man, the natural man, has his own ideas of 'the spirit of sport.' After that no doubt Dr. Wise would respect supernatural morality and religion more. For if we get rid of the supernatural, there will be nothing left but the natural. If not a supernatural religion—what?' (Issue of Nov. 15, 1928).

(4) Dr. Alfred W. Martin, well-known Unitarian and Ethical Society leader, conducting an annual convention of the Ethical Union, in St. Louis, in 1928, in an address before the gathering said, among other things: "We are brothers and sisters in humanity—not in Moses or Jesus or Mohammed." Now to say that we are "brothers and sisters in humanity" is to say that we are all "flesh and blood." But the history of the world certainly demonstrates that being of one blood does not unify people nor promote international good-will. Brotherhood will never come on any fleshly basis because it is essentially a thing of the spirit. There can never be any true "brotherhood of man" outside of Jesus Christ and His church. Jesus alone is the true Foundation for permanent universal unity.

(5) "What is religion without mystery?" asks the brilliant French thinker, Amiel; "the efficacy of religion lies precisely in that which is invisible, extraordinary, miraculous. It is mystery which the religious instinct demands. It is mystery which constitutes the essence of worship. No positive religion can survive the supernatural element which is the reason for its existence. It is the forgetfulness of this psychological law which stultifies the so-called liberal Christianity. It is the realization of it which constitutes the strength of orthodoxy."

(6) Because of its essential element of mystery, true religion requires faith as the principle necessary to its development and influence upon and in the human personality. Its historical evidence may be tested by reason, but its intrinsic spiritual worth is to be tested only by intuition and experience. Experience, moreover, is a sufficient guarantee of the permanency of the Christian faith. Because, as long as graves are dug, as long as mankind are called upon to remember "angel faces . . . which they have loved long since, and lost a while;" as long as bereaved fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, follow the remains of their loved ones to the cities of the dead; just that long faith will continue to "spring eternal in the human breast," just that long hope will hear the rustle of an angel's wing, and just that long sorrowing men and women will believe in and cling to the Bible, knowing that without its exceeding great and precious promises they have nothing.

(7) "One of the marks of the Holy Spirit in the Apostolic Church was the spirit of boldness . . . holy audacity. Where we are dealing with a supernatural Being and taking from Him things that are humanly impossible, it is easier to take

much than little; it is easier to stand in a place of audacious trust than in the place of cautious, timid clinging to the shore. Like the wise seamen in the life of faith, let us launch out into the deep, and find that all things are possible with God, and all things are possible to him that believeth" (A. B. Simpson, quoted in *The Evangelical Christian*, Aug., 1931).

(8) Blanco White, in his sublime sonnet, has written:

"Mysterious Night; when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame—
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame."

Let no one falter before the mysteries of the faith, for without them hope would be in ashes. Just as the impenetrable darkness of the first night of creation was dispelled to usher in a new day with all the glories of the universe attending it; so the present darkness of our understanding, in this "present evil world" of sense and things, is but the prelude to and will ultimately be lost in those eternal glories which the unaided human intellect is incapable of visioning!

(9) "I cannot see beyond today!
But I can trust
That He who guides me all the way
Is wise and just.
And He will let no tempest wild
O'erwhelm His child.

"I cannot see the far-off land;
But over there,
Built by my Father's loving hand
Are mansions fair.
And God will welcome me when I
His child come home.

"I cannot know the realms of space
From star to star;
But this I know, God's wondrous grace
Can reach as far;
And yet it cares for even me,
Where'er I be.

"I may not know the reason why
Of simple things;
But o'er the greatest I can fly
On faith's strong wings,
And live a life of trust and love,
In God above."

—Author unidentified.

XIII.

The Offense of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Gal. 5: 1-16.

Text.—"then hath the stumbling-block of the cross been done away?" Gal. 5: 11.

IN THIS TEXT the Apostle Paul alludes to what he calls the "offense" (R.V., "stumbling-block") of the cross. The greatness of this offense is evident from the persecutions and sufferings that were heaped upon him in the course of his public ministry (cf. 2 Cor. 11: 23-27).

To whom and for what reasons is the preaching of the Cross offensive?

1. *It is offensive because it reveals the majesty of the divine law which necessitated such an offering.* This is an age of "freedom"—of freedom gone to seed. As men rebel against authority, they prostitute liberty into license, and seek to bring about a universal reign of the law of the jungle. To the cynical, sensual, and materialistic, such preaching is offensive. That whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap, is to them an offensive doctrine. Witness the sensualism of Elinor Glyn, the cynicism of Sinclair Lewis, the "realism" of Eugene O'Neill, the hopeless atheism of Bertrand Russell—the blind who lead the blind in our day and generation.

2. *It is offensive to worldly-minded religionists because it reveals the fact of sin.* Certain conditions in this world of ours call for an explanation. Many reasons are advanced, but there is a strange general avoidance of the only true explanation, which is *sin*. Even from many so-called Christian pulpits *sin* is never mentioned, or when it is spoken of is explained away. People of this twentieth century pride themselves on their culture, refinement and respectability. They don't care to be told that they are sinners. But the preaching of the Cross declares that *sin* is a fact in the life of every human being. This is offensive.

3. *It is offensive, too, because it reveals the malignity of sin.* Sin is a terrible thing, as proved by the awful anguish and loneliness of the Cross.

4. *It is offensive because it reveals the depravity of human nature.* Not that human nature is "totally depraved;" only the devil and his angels are totally and hopelessly depraved. Man is not totally depraved, because if so he would be unable to respond to the overtures of the gospel. Nevertheless man is depraved, even though he does not like to admit it.

5. *It is offensive because it declares the wages of sin.* "The

wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). A very popular doctrine today is that "death is a delusion;" and to those who hold such a theory the preaching of the Cross—that by sin came death—is offensive.

6. *It is offensive because it reveals man's helplessness.* Man is a proud, boastful creature; he does not like to hear that "he that believeth not hath been judged already." That is an offensive saying. Men are proposing many remedies for sin, some of which are the foulest concoctions ever brewed in the bottomless pit. Lyman Abbott has said that "our hope is in the advance of scientific knowledge of evolution, and the growth of the democratic spirit." But scientific knowledge is uncertain, evolution is exasperatingly slow, and the democratic spirit is still an unreliable experiment. Eugenics says that we should be well-born, but makes no provision for those who have already been born. Other remedies which are being offered are "salvation by character," "social regeneration," "the religion of humanitarianism," and now "psycho-analysis." *But there is only one cure for sin—the blood of Christ; and there is only one means of application—the preaching of the Cross.* Thus the preaching of the Cross is an offense.

7. *Finally, it is offensive because it reveals the eternal hopelessness of every human being who "neglects so great a salvation."* "The wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3: 36). There is no intimation of post-mortem salvation in scripture. The verdict at death will be: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job 14: 3-4). "He that is filthy, let him be made filthy still . . . and he that is holy, let him be made holy still" (Rev. 22: 11). The Cross is God's final, complete and all-sufficient offer of salvation. (See Isa. 1: 18, Heb. 10: 26-31.)

Conclusion: (1) Jesus stated expressly that it should be the work of the Holy Spirit in the present dispensation to "convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16: 8). As the Holy Spirit operates, however, through the Word of God, it follows that these ends can be achieved only through the faithful preaching of the Cross (1 Cor. 1: 21, Rom. 10: 14-17).

(2) The Holy Spirit thus operated on the day of Pentecost, through the instrumentality of the first gospel sermon, upon the minds and hearts of some three thousand people. Note Peter's fearless denunciation of their sins (Acts 2: 23, 36). Note, also, that as a result of his preaching "they were pricked in their heart" (v. 37).

(3) One of the certain ear-marks of great gospel preaching is fearless denunciation of sin in all its forms. Another is the presentation of the blood of Christ as God's one and

only remedy for sin. This necessitates the preaching of the Cross.

(4) Let us, therefore, as Christian evangelists, "preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4: 2). Let us be determined to know nothing among those with whom we labor "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2: 2).

XIV.

The Thief on the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Luke 23: 32-43.

Text.—"For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19: 10.

IT IS SIGNIFICANT that Luke is the only one of the four gospel writers who has recorded this incident of the pardon of the penitent thief on the cross. There is obviously a reason for this, and the reason no doubt lies in the nature and purpose of Luke's narrative. Luke is the biographer of the *humanity* of Jesus. His record has been called "the gospel of the human touch." Dr. Charles R. Erdman says, "His narrative is characterized by its absorbing human interest. It is a story of real life; it is suffused with emotion; it is full of gladness and sorrow, of songs and of tears; it is vocal with praise and with prayer." Again, "The character of Jesus is so subtle and complex as to defy exact analysis, and yet it is evident that certain of its features, common to all, are emphasized successively by each one of the gospel writers. Matthew depicts its majesty, Mark its strength, and John its sublimity; but Luke reveals its beauty, and paints a picture of the ideal Man, the Savior of the world" (*Introduction to The Gospel of Luke: An Exposition*).

Matthew, a Jew himself, writing to the Jews, portrays Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and anticipation. His favorite expression is, "that it might be fulfilled." Mark, writing to the Romans, pictures Him as the great Miracle Worker, the King of Nature; and Mark's favorite word is "straightway." John, writing for the benefit of later ages and particularly for the church, presents Him as the eternal Logos, who at His incarnation became the only begotten Son of God. John deals with the eternal, mystical, and spiritual aspects of His being. His favorite term is "Son of God," and his favorite themes are "light," "life," and "love."

But Luke, "the beloved physician," portrays Him as the Son of man, the Head of the new creation. His narrative is characterized by unusual literary beauty, and is plainly

the product of Greek culture. No doubt Luke wrote primarily for the benefit of the Greeks who were lovers of beauty in every form. He pictures Jesus as the world's beautiful Character, whose name is Wonderful (Isa. 9: 6). In Luke's presentation the human element is dominant. He is the only one of the four biographers who has recorded the stories of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and Lazarus and the Rich Man, all so intensely rich in human element and appeal. And Luke, as has been stated, is the only one of the four who has preserved for us the story of the penitent thief whom Jesus forgave while on the Cross. Let us study (1) the story of the incident, and (2) the lessons to be derived from it.

1. *The story of the incident.*

(1) "And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him. . . ." This place of crucifixion was "a bare, rounded hill located outside the city gates" (Erdman). The Greek word used here is *Kranion*, from which our word *cranium* is derived, and means literally, "a skull." The Hebrew word *Golgotha* (John 19: 17), occurs in Judges 9: 53. The Latin word with the same meaning is *Calvary*. This hillock was evidently so called because of its general contour. In the words of the old hymn by Mrs. C. F. Alexander:

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all."

(2) "There they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." The word *malefactor* is derived from two Greek words and means literally, *evil-worker*. Matthew tells us that these two condemned men were robbers. Brigandage was quite common in that country then as now.

(3) "And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us." What impudence! What had this fellow ever done to merit salvation? How like people of our day who live in sin and crime all their lives; then when adversity overtakes them, or they face the certainty of death, they rail at God Almighty! They accuse Him of dealing with them harshly. Others may profess repentance, but it is short-lived. I recall the old stanza:

"God and the doctor we alike adore,
Just on the brink of danger, not before;
The danger past, both are unrequited,
God is forgotten and the doctor slighted."

(4) "But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost

thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." Here we have the unfailing evidences of repentance, viz., (a) *An open confession of the deity of Jesus*. To this hardened criminal, here was a dying man who was at the same time a forgiving God. He saw in the suffering, dying Savior One who was to return as universal King (Rom. 10: 9-10), and openly confessed his faith. This robber may have heard the trial of Jesus, or a part of it; and we know that he heard Him praying for His enemies; but whatever it was that gave rise to his belief and trust, he looked upon the Crucified One as Savior and King who had the power to receive him into eternal glory. (b) *His reverence in the presence of Deity*—"Dost thou not even fear God?" To him the attitude of his fellow criminal was sheer blasphemy. He had not feared men—he might at least fear God, seeing that he was about to die. (c) *His ready admission of his own guilt*: "seeing thou art in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly." No self-pity here! He admitted his sins like a man. The beginning of penitence is in seeing one's real self. A man once said to a plain-spoken evangelist, "The people do not like your sermons, because you speak too harshly. They do not like to be told they are sinners." The evangelist, his eyes flashing, replied: "If they are not willing to admit they are sinners, they are not ready to come to Christ." (d) *His humility*: "Jesus, remember me. . . ." Just a plea for mercy, for unmerited favor!

(5) Jesus replied, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (a) Faith and penitence are rewarded, as always, in this manifestation of divine Grace. (b) "Remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Some ancient authorities read, "*into thy kingdom*." Does this mean that the penitent believer was appealing to Jesus to remember him at His second advent? I think not. I hardly think that this poor man is still waiting for his appeal to be realized. No, Jesus said, "Today." (c) Today, not *some* day, as advocates of the "soul sleeping" delusion would have us believe. (d) In Paradise, not in *purgatory*. Where was Paradise? What is meant by Paradise? I do not know, nor do I know of anyone who does know. Jesus prayed just before He expired on the Cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Wherever Jesus may have gone that day, i.e., the real personality of Jesus, He went into a state of intimacy and communion with the Father. With this thought I am content. "Shalt thou be *with me*," is sufficient. (e) Paradise—"somewhere beyond the blue." As Jessie Brown Pounds has written:

"Somewhere the sun is shining,
Somewhere the song-birds dwell;
Hush, then, thy sad repining,
God lives, and all is well.

"Somewhere the day is longer,
Somewhere the task is done;
Somewhere the heart is stronger,
Somewhere the guerdon won.

"Somewhere the load is lifted,
Close by an open gate;
Somewhere the clouds are rifted,
Somewhere the angels wait.

"Somewhere, Somewhere,
Beautiful Isle of Somewhere!
Land of the true, where we live anew—
Beautiful Isle of Somewhere!"

(f) Did Jesus forgive this poor sinner? I reply that He did. Did Jesus pardon his sins? He did. He had the authority to do so. His blood had already been shed for the remission of sins. His body had already been placed on the altar as a propitiation for sin. But the law of pardon for the Christian dispensation had not yet been instituted (Acts 2: 37-39), and while Jesus was still in the flesh He had the power and authority to forgive sins on His own terms. (g) Is there any efficacy in death-bed repentance? In this case, Yes, because the King of the spiritual world was there in person. But what about death-bed repentance in the case of a person living *since* the death of Christ and under the new testament law of pardon? I cannot say dogmatically. Far be it from me to attempt to set limits to the grace and power of the Almighty. I offer it as my opinion, however, that when a man puts off repentance until he has gotten to the place where he is physically unable to obey the gospel, i.e., to be Scripturally baptized, he is from that moment at the mercy of God. I shall not sit in judgment on such a person. I shall leave all such cases to God for final adjudication. I have never undertaken trying to transact the Lord's business for Him. Moreover I am convinced that if churchmen and theologians in all ages had been equally modest with respect to such matters, matters entirely outside man's jurisdiction, the church would not be suffering from the speculation and confusion that exists today on every hand. "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us" (Deut. 29: 29).

(6) "On a barren hill beyond the city walls they nailed his perfect body to the cross. Two robbers were crucified with Him. It was over. The rabble had sickened quickly of its revenge and scattered; his friends were hiding; the soldiers were busy casting lots for his garments. There was nothing left of the external influences which fire men's imaginations, or grip their loyalty. Surely the victory of his enemies was complete; he could do no miracle there, hanging on a cross. And yet—"Jesus." It was the voice of one of the robbers. "Jesus," he says painfully, "remember me when thou comest into thy

kingdom!" Read that, oh men, and bow your heads. You who have let yourself picture him as weak, as a man of sorrows, uninspiring, glad to die. There have been leaders who could call forth enthusiasm when their fortunes ran high. But he, when his enemies had done their worst, so bore himself that a crucified felon looked into his dying eyes and saluted him as King!" (Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*, pp. 219-220).

2. *The lessons to be derived from the story.*

(1) This incident impresses the fact upon our minds that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.

(a) "The *lost*." Yes—"all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). "For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3: 17). The world is under divine judgment, and has been since man fell; "he that believeth not hath been judged already" (John 3: 18, 36). Let me thunder it into your ears that *the world is under divine condemnation, under the curse of sin*; and that the only way of escape is through Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty and lifted the curse for all who accept Him as their Savior. "He that believeth on him is not judged." "He that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life" (John 3: 18, 36).

(b) "Sin, then, is a terrible reality. It is parrot talk for us to try to evade it by giving it a new label, calling it 'negative goodness.' The first chapter of *Romans* does not define sin in terms of negative goodness. Paul's picture of sin is dark and terrible. It is equally fallacious to try to define sin as 'an illusion of mortal mind.' John the beloved says: 'If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us' (1 John 1: 10). Every Bible writer who refers to sin treats it as a reality. Nor, again, can we solve the problem of sin by calling it 'a relic of our animal inheritance.' When God breathed into the first man's nostrils 'the breath of life' (Gen. 2: 7), he became a living soul. Man was innocent and sinless thus far, and it has not been proven that he had an animal inheritance. How long he lived a sinless life we do not know. Perhaps almost one hundred years. Seth was born when Adam was one hundred and thirty years old, and at that time Abel was a grown man. In sin man fell, and while in exact phrase it is not called a 'fall,' yet man did fall, and this fall was not upward. In the fall man lost his original glory and his supremacy over the world. Nor is there room in the light of this Book to try to solve the problem of sin by calling it 'an invention of priests and moralists to gain control over the hearts of men.' Sin is a violation of God's law, and it does not fade away when we say it is just 'missing the mark'" (Claude J. Miller, *Christian Standard*, Dec. 1, 1928).

(c) "Some men are inclined to speak lightly of this matter. They talk glibly about a 'fall upward,' 'a stage in our spiritual development.' Only those who have not pondered deeply and

have not searched far can so speak of the hideous monster. It is our one great problem, and we may add the *only* problem. Men are inclined to believe that it has to do only with what they are pleased to style 'the moral side of life.' That is not so. It is universal, since everywhere problems are found, and all problems are but phases of one problem; namely, *sin*. We talk about the 'industrial problem.' Search it to the bottom, and it resolves itself into greed, hate, incompetency, injustice, and things of this nature. These are matters of morality, and so make sin the basic problem of industry. Or there is the 'international problem.' Resolve it to its elements, and you find selfishness, bigotry, intolerance, ambition, and these are all phases of sin. If sin were settled, there would be harmony, concord, justice, good-will, and the problems of the earth would be settled forever and for every one" (Geo. W. Knepper, *Christian Standard*, Nov. 3, 1928).

(d) "Sin exists to be overcome, and it is the vocation of the spiritual man to overcome it. . . . If sin is destined to remain in eternal antagonism to good, then it is hard to reconcile its existence with the ethical character of God" (Galloway, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 542). But God does not expect man to overcome sin in his own strength alone. "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" Wherever that is left out, Christianity is left out. . . . Man is still a sinner, and still his great need is redemption from sin. Calvary has no successor, the Lamb of God has no substitute. He is the sinner's only hope" (Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney, *Of Them He Chose Twelve*, p. 181).

(e) Jer. 17: 9, Matt. 18: 7, Rom. 7: 14-25. Rom. 6: 23—"For the wages of sin is death." This is a striking pronouncement; there are no qualifying adjectives or adverbs in it; just "three hard, knotty, disagreeable nouns"—wages, sin, death; with sufficient other words to hold them together. There is no soft-pedaling here. "The wages of sin is death." You know—I know—all men know this is true! It is not true because it is in the Book of God; it is in the Book because it is true. It was written down in the book of nature long before Paul wrote it into the book of scripture. It is written everywhere; it is a universal law; a matter of history, observation, experience and revelation; that any and every infraction of the course of nature brings its penalty, and that is ultimately the death penalty. "The wages of sin is death, but"—ah, wonderful "but"—"the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Thank God there is one thing in this universe that is stronger than sin, and that is the grace of God "which bringeth salvation." No one in all human history realizes more fully that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost, than this poor, penitent thief on the cross!

"There is a fountain filled with blood

Drawn from Immanuel's veins;

And sinners plunged beneath that flood,

Lose all their guilty stains.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away."

—William Cowper.

(2) We learn, too, from this incident that Jesus, during the three years and more of His incarnate ministry and life, possessed the divine prerogative to forgive sins and exercised it frequently. (See Matt. 9: 1-8, Luke 5: 20-26, 7: 45-50, Matt. 9: 18-26, John 8: 10, 11, etc.)

(a) The question may arise in this connection as to the distinction between *forgiveness* and *remission*. Is there any such distinction? It would seem so; that forgiveness is essentially *personal*, whereas remission is *legal*. "Forgiveness is, first of all, a personal matter between two persons—God and man. Forgiveness, however, must mean that healing forces are set to work to repair the damage done by sin" (Bishop McConnell, *Is God Limited?* p. 146). "Many terms are used in Scripture for this cure. We have the word 'conversion,' which is the general term for the whole process of man's turning to God. Primarily it is a military term which means 'right about face.' 'Regeneration,' which means to be born again, is one of terms used to designate the knitting of the soul to God, and particularly stresses God's part of the work, for a man is not born of his own will, but begotten by the will of another. 'Justification' is primarily a legal term which suggests that due restitution has been made in regard to some broken law. 'Reconciliation' carries with it the idea of severed friendship, which has at last been thoroughly cemented. 'Redemption' suggests freedom from bondage being purchased for us by another. 'Atonement' means that the penalty has been paid. 'Salvation' of course carries the general idea of being saved, while 'forgiveness' means that the old barrier has been broken down, and man's spirit stands again in its primitive relationship to God. It is worth noting that this word 'forgiveness' is unique to Christianity. The idea it conveys is not found in other religions. The heathen feels that his gods must be appeased, but the whole burden is put upon the suppliant; but our God loves to forgive; He is *all* grace, and so He makes the overture in forgiveness" (Geo. W. Knepper, *Christian Standard*, Nov. 3, 1928).

(b) The question may arise here: How could this penitent thief have received pardon under the Jewish dispensation and law, before the all-sufficient Atonement had been made for the sins of the world? My answer is that he received remission of sins just as did Noah, Abraham, the people baptized by John the Baptizer, and in fact all obedient Jews under the Law of Moses. The bloody sacrifices made for sin during those pre-Christian centuries did not actually secure re-

mission of sins, but caused their sins to be rolled over from year to year, looking forward to the shedding of the blood of Christ. The obedience of those who obeyed God's laws, statutes and commandments prior to the Cross, looked forward to the shedding of Christ's blood; and the efficacy of His blood reached back over those centuries to make possible their remission of sins, although the process, technically speaking, was not consummated prior to Calvary. Hence it may be rightly said that there was no actual remission of sin until the proper Atonement had been made by our Lord on the Cross. Moreover, at the time Jesus pardoned the penitent thief, He had already shed His blood and offered His body as propitiation for sin; in other words, the necessary offering once for all time was in effect consummated.

(3) In the last place, we learn by inference that we who live under the Christian dispensation and under the new covenant cannot receive the pardon of our sins as did the penitent thief, but can do so only on the terms laid down in the last will and testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

(a) Why can't the alien sinner be saved today as was the penitent thief on the cross? For the obvious reason that the latter was saved by our Lord personally, and *prior to the institution of the new testament law of pardon*. In the same manner as He saved the woman to whom He said, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Luke 7: 48). He was there in person and had the authority to forgive sins on His own terms. While a man still lives he has the right to dispense his possessions as he may see fit; but after his death, his property must be distributed according to the terms of his will. When the Word was on this earth in person, acting as the representative of the Godhead in executing the scheme of redemption, as God in the flesh He had the authority to forgive sins by a spoken word; but when He became obedient unto the death of the Cross, and later returned to the right hand of the Father, He made provision for His blessings to be dispensed according to the terms and conditions of His last will and testament. He appointed the Apostles as executors of this testament and specially qualified them for the task by sending the Holy Spirit upon them to guide them into all truth (John 14: 26, 15: 26-27, 16: 7-15, 20: 21-22; Luke 24: 45-49; Acts 1: 1-8, 2: 1-4, 10: 40-43, etc). This last will and testament was *probated* on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, its divine authority attested by the descent of the Holy Spirit in demonstrations of supernatural power (Acts 2). Acting under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit, the Apostles on that day revealed the terms on which remission of sins is granted under the reign of the Messiah (Acts 2: 37-42). On this memorable day the gospel was proclaimed as fact for the first time in the history

of the world (Acts 2: 22-24, 36); penitent believers were told what to do to be saved under the new covenant (vv. 37-38); and on their obedience to those terms were "added together" into a spiritual fellowship (vv. 41, 47), characterized by their mutual "sharing together" the indwelling Spirit of God. This spiritual community was, and is still, known as the church, the body of Christ, of which Christ Himself was and is the Head (Eph. 1: 22-23). In other words, on the day when the terms of pardon were first stated, accepted and obeyed, the church of Christ was *incorporated* by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, acting through the instrumentality of the executors of the new testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 1: 2-3).

(b) *What are the terms of pardon under the new covenant?* The answer to this question may be obtained by a careful analysis of the various cases of conversion recorded in the book of Acts: (1) The three thousand on the day of Pentecost heard (Acts 2: 14-36); believed (v. 37); repented (v. 38); and were baptized for the remission of sins (vv. 38, 41). (2) The Samaritans heard (Acts 8: 5-6); believed, (v. 12); and were baptized (v. 12). (3) The Ethiopian heard (Acts 8: 35); believed (v. 37); confessed Christ (v. 37, Authorized Version); was baptized and went on his way rejoicing (vv. 36-39). (4) Saul of Tarsus heard what to do, from Ananias (Acts 9: 6-17, 22: 14, 15); believed (9: 6, 26: 19); repented (9: 8-11, 26: 19); and was baptized (9: 18, 22: 16). (5) Cornelius and his household heard the gospel as preached by Simon Peter (Acts 10: 34-43), and were baptized (vv. 47-48). (6) Lydia and her household heard the word as Paul proclaimed it (Acts 16: 14), and were baptized (v. 15). (7) The Philippian jailor and his household heard the word (Acts 16: 32); believed (v. 31); and were baptized the same hour of the night (v. 33). (8) The Corinthians, including Crispus the ruler of the synagogue, heard, believed and were baptized (Acts 18: 8). Correlating these scriptures we learn that the terms of pardon are four in number: (1) *faith* in Christ, (John 14: 1, Acts 16: 31, Rom. 10: 9-10); (2) *repentance* towards Christ, (Acts 2: 38, 17: 30, 2 Cor. 7: 10); (3) *confession* of Christ (Matt. 10: 32-33, Rom. 10: 9-10); and (4) *baptism* into Christ (Matt. 28: 19-20, Mark 16: 15-16, Acts 2: 38, 41, Rom. 6: 1-7, Gal. 3: 26-27, Col. 2: 12). These are the conditions of membership in the new covenant; of citizenship in the kingdom of the Messiah; of adoption into the family of God (Rom. 8: 15-17). Obedience to these terms will bring the alien sinner *into* Christ; into a state of reconciliation with God through Christ; into a condition of redemption from the guilt of sin, in which the "saved sinner" has unhindered access to the throne of divine grace; into a new relationship and life in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5: 17-19). It should be understood of course that this primary obedience is just the initial phase of the process termed salvation; and that ultimate and everlasting salvation, which includes the redemption of the body, is con-

tingent upon faithful continuance in the essential items of Christian faith, worship, life and service. (See Acts 2: 42, Gal. 5: 22-25, 2 Pet. 1: 5-11, Rev. 2: 7, etc.). You cannot be saved, therefore, as the penitent thief was saved, because Christ is not here in person to save you, and because you and I are under the terms of the *last will and testament* of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: (1) When this condemned criminal saw Jesus dying on the Cross in all the majesty and beauty of His kingliness, though he probably understood little or nothing of the significance of His dying for the sins of the world, he did realize for the first time in his long, hardened criminal career, something of the amazing goodness of God, and this realization led him to repentance (Rom. 2: 4).

(a) "This was the peculiar power of Jesus: He had the transfiguring touch that made things rare and beautiful and sweet. Ancient Calvary was a charnel house, He made it a shrine. Nazareth was despised, He made it beloved. The apostles were crude Galilean peasants, He made them theologians, orators and saints. The halt, the lame, the blind, the lepers, were outcasts; He gave them physical perfection. Mary Magdalene was a devil, He gave her the charm of an angel. There was no limit to His transfiguring power. He took the drab dull day and made it radiant. The casual occasion, He made a crisis in human history. The chance meeting by the wayside became an eternal influence. And the wonder of wonders is this, that which happened in the vales of Galilee and on the hills of Judea, is available today. He has lost none of His power, and, what He did, He is still doing for all places where He enters, for all lives which He touches" (Geo. W. Knepper, *Christian Evangelist*, July 26, 1928).

(b) When men see the King in all His beauty, they find Him irresistible. It is said that two Englishmen, Lord Littleton and Gilbert West, entered into an agreement on one occasion that each would write an article in refutation of the claims of Christianity, one taking the New Testament story of the Resurrection as the basis of his article, the other the story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. These men, though well-known for their skepticism, were honest inquirers after truth. And their study of their chosen subjects convinced them that the gospel is founded upon impregnable truth. Lew Wallace's personal experience in the writing of *Ben Hur* was the same: though he started out a skeptic, he became a believer.

(c) "We come back at last to what Forsyth calls 'the mighty futility of the cross.' The lone sufferer hanging there in desolation bearing the sin of a blind and willful world, tells us more of the character of God than all the mighty empires that have flourished—and passed—since the beginning of time.

Jesus not only triumphed *over* death, but *in* it and *through* it. He won the heart of the world by dying to the world, and the sure road to victory for every man leads by the foot of the Cross." Again, "If God did not speak in Jesus Christ, He has been dumb from the foundation of the world. If God is not Christlike, He is dethroned, and Jesus saves us *from* Him rather than to Him." (Gilbert T. Rowe, *Reality in Religion*, pp. 319-320).

(2) My sinner friend, you are in need of this salvation which He alone can give you. Without Christ, I care not how cultivated, refined or talented you may be—without Christ, I repeat, you are lost, *eternally* lost. Nor can you get away entirely from the consciousness of your lost condition. You may hide behind a mask of respectability, you may waste your substance in riotous living in a futile attempt to forget, but deep down in your heart there is a still, small voice whispering, "Repent! You are a sinner! You are lost! Repent before it is everlastingly too late!"

(a) "Granting you are free from the temptations of sensuality, lying, stealing, cruelty—Are you living up to your ideals? Are you as valuable to the community as you might be? Are you in every respect the man you would like to be? If not, you are, in the old phrase, living in a state of sin" (William Lyon Phelps, *Adventures and Confessions*, p. 58).

(b) "No conviction is burned more deeply into the inner heart of the world than this, that sin is not done with us when we have done with sin. There are men and women by the hundred thousand who would gladly give all they possess if they could but lay their hands upon one hour of madness and pluck it from the past. Writers like Dr. Harnack and Dr. Davidson do not recognize the sense of guilt. They speak as if we had no relation to our past. But in the deep heart of man the sense of guilt is permanent, not destroyed by time, or culture, or the enlargement of vision, or even by the apparent deadness and oppression of the spiritual nature. 'It has us, and not we it. It pursues us flying and holds us rebelling.' It is in Christ, our Ransom and Recall, that the soul finds all it craves for: pardon, rest, power" (W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Seen and the Unseen*, p. 99).

(c) How much longer will you reject the overtures of divine grace? "Some years ago an old preacher told me that three miles from the town in which he dwelt there lived a wealthy old farmer, who had an only son. The father had lavished upon him every luxury that money could buy. He had graduated him at one of the best colleges; but that boy, like many boys, went off to college and matriculated in learning and graduated in sin and debauchery. He came home from college dissipated and debauched, and went from bad to worse. The father, kind and indulgent and good, did all he could to

win and save the boy. He used every means that a mortal man could use to rescue and save his boy; but day after day he walked into the home drunk. One day, as the boy came in at the gate drunk, the father met him and turned him around and said: 'Get off these premises and never come back again. You are no longer my boy.' The father turned around and immediately walked up into a grove and stopped at a large oak tree. He took off his hat and laid it down on the ground and clasped both hands at the back of his head and uttered the most unearthly groans. Three times he did this; and then picked up his hat and put it on, and walked back to the house. That boy lived a life of debauchery and sin in that town, died and was buried. The father never attended the funeral and never asked a question about him. He stood that day by that oak tree and pulled that boy up out of his heart and threw him away, though it almost killed him to do it. Oh, what a picture of abused love and affection! 'Because I have called and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hands and no man regardeth; therefore, I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh'" (Stuart, *Famous Stories of Sam Jones*, pp. 40-41). My sinner friend, the love of God will follow you to the grave, but no farther; there are times when love and mercy reach their bounds, and justice must be meted out. Don't trifle any longer with the living God! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God, impenitent, disobedient and unsaved! It is a terrible thing to plunge into eternity unprepared!

(3) I plead with you then to come to the "fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13: 1), the "fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins!" There under the precious blood of Christ, covered by the mantle of redeeming grace, you may find pardon, joy and peace.

"The great Physician now is near,
The sympathizing Jesus;
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer,
O hear the voice of Jesus.

"Your many sins are all forgiv'n,
O hear the voice of Jesus.
Go on your way in peace to heav'n,
And wear a crown with Jesus.

"Sweetest note in seraph song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung—
Jesus, blessed Jesus!"

Wm. Hunter.

XV.

"It Is Finished!"

Scripture Reading.—John 19: 23-30.

Text.—"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit." John 19: 30.

WE COME NOW to the consummation of the world's outstanding, yet most sublime tragedy. A terrible darkness has settled down upon that barren hill back of Jerusalem, as if the sun might be refusing longer to lighten a world in which men can hate so bitterly and kill so cruelly. The Lonely Sufferer on that middle cross is about to make the Supreme Sacrifice of the ages. When we read the awful story and visualize the scene in our own minds, it seems that the shadows gather around us, and we ourselves feel the grim reality, the stark nakedness, the utter loneliness of that last hour. The Man of Sorrows bends beneath the crushing weight of the world's sin and rejection. Betrayed by one of His disciples, denied by another, murdered by His own people, He is now treading the winepress *alone*. The physical suffering occasioned by the driving of the spikes through His living hands and feet has paled into insignificance as compared with the pangs of loneliness which now rend His immaculate spirit. It would seem that even our Heavenly Father, suffering with an intensity equal to that of His dear Son on the Cross, unable to bear the sight of it longer, has turned His face away. The time has come for the Lord's vesture to be dipped in His own precious blood. In His capacity as High Priest He must now offer up unto God His own perfect human body as a propitiation for our sins (Rev. 19: 13, Rom. 3: 25). The cup must now be drained to its bitter dregs. The baptism with which He is to be overwhelmed must now be experienced. Into the depths He must now plunge! Into the jaws of death He must now go! Into the shadows of Hades He must now descend! "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit." *He died of a broken heart.* Let me thunder it into your ears, saint and sinner alike, that *for you* He died of a broken heart.

"And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised" (Matt. 27: 51, 52).

"It is finished!" What do these words signify? Very much—in fact more than our language can express! The Law is perfected and abrogated! Prophecy is fulfilled! Atonement is consummated! Redemption is realized! "It is finished!"

That is, *His* work was finished. His role in the drama of redemption was played. There were certain things for the Father to do even yet—but the Son's work according to God's eternal purpose was achieved. There were many things for the Holy Spirit to accomplish in subsequent ages—but the Son had wrought what He came down to earth to do. The Father must raise Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places (Acts 2: 24, 10: 40, Phil. 2: 9-11, Eph. 1: 3, 2: 6, Mark 16: 19, etc.). The Spirit must descend according to promise and prepare the Bride to meet the Bridegroom (John 14: 16-17, 15: 26, 16: 7-10, Acts 1: 4-5, 2: 1-4, Rev. 21: 2). But the Word had become flesh and dwelt among us for His allotted time; as the Son of God He had worked the work which the Father had sent Him to accomplish. He had, didactically speaking, executed the scheme of redemption which the Father had originated and which the Spirit has been for now more than nineteen centuries, applying and realizing in the hearts of the saints.

In talking with His disciples, after the experience with the woman of Sychar at Jacob's well, He said: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John 4: 34; cf. John 7: 28-29, 8: 23, 10: 37-38). Later, in that wonderful intercessory prayer, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel according to John, and uttered in the gathering shadows of the Cross, He prayed as follows: "Father, the hour is come; glorify the Son, that the Son may glorify thee. . . . I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17: 1-5). It was just a few tragic hours afterward that He cried, "It is finished;" then, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" "and having said this, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23: 46).

Our text is therefore a disclosure of the most profound spiritual significance, a revelation sweeping in its import and fundamental in its theology. It reveals three truths that are elementary in a sense, yet very essential to our

understanding of the Scriptures, that we may know how to "rightly divide the word of truth":

1. *It intimates the abrogation of the Law and the institution of the reign of Grace* (John 1: 17).

(1) *Matt. 5: 17.* Jesus lived under the Jewish dispensation and the Mosaic Law. He says that He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. He kept the Law perfectly, and not one jot nor tittle passed away until "all things were accomplished" by His perfect sacrifice upon the Cross (v. 18). He set a perfect example in His obedience to the Father's will, in His loyalty to the Father's word and in His reverence for the Father's house. He fulfilled the Law *by keeping it perfectly*, and when He died He nailed it to His cross (Col. 2: 13-15). When I announce that I shall preach at a certain place at an appointed time, then go to that place at the time specified and deliver the sermon as announced, I have fulfilled that appointment. The appointment is thus completed and the incident closed. So Christ was the end of the Law (Rom. 10: 4). By His death on the Cross He abrogated the old law and covenant of the flesh, and ratified the new covenant and law "of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 2).

(2) It seems strange indeed that up to about one hundred years ago the Christian world as represented by the denominational order of that day had never learned the fundamental differences between the Old and New Testaments. The great majority of preachers delivered their sermons largely from the Old Testament Scriptures. I recall hearing a sermon one time when I was a boy, in which the preacher undertook to tell his listeners what to do to be saved. His argument was based entirely on the incident of Jacob's wrestling with the heavenly messenger, as related in *Genesis*. He urged his hearers to "take hold of God," to "hang on," and to "never let go" until God came down in some miraculous fashion and rewarded their importunity. Now if you can show me any relation whatsoever between this Old Testament incident and the matter of becoming a Christian, I shall be willing to admit that my knowledge of the Bible is extremely limited. As a matter of fact, there is no such connection. Nor is there any excuse for going to the Psalms of David or to the wailings of Jeremiah for a Scriptural answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" when, as all Biblical scholars should know, the book of *Acts* was written for the express purpose of answering this most important question.

(3) The books of the Old Testament point forward in type, symbol, metaphor and prophecy to Christ and His church as revealed in the New Testament. The subject-matter of the Old Testament is valuable to us in its delineation of human character and in its treatment of the problems of everyday life. Its ethical value is inestimable. Its evidential worth, in laying a proper foundation for the Christian system, is im-

measurable. *But the books of the Old Testament do not reveal the Christian religion.* Though inspired of God, they were for the fleshly seed of Abraham only. Christianity is not revealed in the Old Testament, except in shadow, as a thing of the future, a system yet to be instituted. *In brief, Judaism is revealed in the Old Testament, but Christianity is revealed in the New.* In the words of the old couplet:

"The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed;
The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."

Yet the two testaments are not identical, by which I mean that the latter is not an enlargement nor continuation of the former, but a distinct and separate covenant, built upon better promises and offering infinitely greater rewards (Eph. 2: 14-16). (Note the significance of the expression, "one *new* man," as used here).

(4) Alexander Campbell was the first theologian to point out the fundamental differences between the two covenants. His epoch-making *Sermon on the Law*, delivered at the Cross Creek Baptist Church, in 1816, in what was then Virginia and now West Virginia, ushered in a new era in the matter of properly dividing the Scriptures into their dispensations and covenants. He took as his text Paul's statement in Rom. 8: 3. "Here, for the first time, he drew clearly the distinctions between the Law and the gospel, which proved in after years an impregnable bulwark in his conflicts with religious error. He showed that the Law was temporary and local, but the gospel was for all time, and universal. As a system, the Law had waxed old and passed away. The type had given way to the antitype, and the shadow to the substance. Only the ethical which was necessarily immortal, remained. The Patriarchal dispensation was the starlight; the Jewish dispensation was the moonlight; that of John the Baptist the twilight; and the Christian dispensation, beginning with the coronation of Christ and the descent of the Spirit, was the sunlight. The patriarchs had the bud, the Jews the blossom, and we have the fruit of divine grace" (M. M. Davis, *The Restoration Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 121-122). Strange, is it not, that this sermon should have been so revolutionary in its day. Today the differences between the two covenants are quite generally recognized.

(5) Every Bible reader knows that the Book consists of two general divisions or parts: what is known as the old testament or covenant, and what is known as the new testament or covenant; what is known as the Law before the Cross, and what is known as the gospel since the Cross; what is known as the "letter" on the other side of the Cross, and what is known as the "spirit" on this side; what is called "the ministration of death" on the other side, and what is called "the ministration of life" on this side. Calvary is the dividing line. When Jesus expired on the Cross, the Partition Veil—i.e., the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, of the Temple—

was rent in twain; thus symbolizing the point of demarcation between the covenants, and signifying that for the first time since man's fall the way into heaven itself, our Holy of Holies, was opened up; and that humanity had unhindered access to the throne of divine grace without the services of an officiating earthly priesthood. In brief it symbolized the abrogation of the old covenant, and the ratification of the new (Heb., chs. 8 and 9).

(6) It becomes exceedingly important that we know what belongs to the respective covenants. This is evidently what Paul had in mind in exhorting Timothy to prepare himself to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15). Much confusion in Christian thinking and practice has been occasioned by the failure of theologians and preachers in general to heed this admonition. I have heard it said, even in these days of enlightenment, that "the whole Bible is binding upon Christians." I am convinced that those who make such an assertion do not believe what they say; or, if they do, they certainly do not practice what they preach. I don't know of a church body in all Christendom that even makes a pretense of perpetuating the laws and observances of the old covenant. For example, under the old covenant, God commanded the following: (a) that every male child should be circumcised on the eighth day (Gen. 17: 9-14); (b) that many different kinds of bloody animal sacrifices should be offered (Lev. 23); (c) that the Passover should be kept annually, (Exo. 12); (d) that the seventh day should be set aside as the Sabbath, as a memorial of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exo. 16: 21-30, Deut. 5: 12-15); (e) that the people should allow their lands to rest every seventh year (Exo. 23: 10-11); (f) that a distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals should prevail (Lev. 11); (g) the Levitical priesthood, the Tabernacle and its ritualism, the Day of Atonement, the many and varied solemn feasts and convocations, new moons and sabbaths, etc. Under the old covenant, no one was permitted to kindle a fire on the Sabbath day (Exo. 35: 2-3). In Numbers 15: 32-36, there is an account of a violation of this command, and we read that the guilty party was taken outside the camp and stoned to death. Capital punishment was the penalty usually inflicted for an infraction of the Law of Moses; hence, the Apostle Paul speaks of the old covenant as the "ministration of death" (2 Cor. 3: 7). The various Christian communions make no pretense of maintaining these Mosaic laws and observances, and would indeed be foolish to do so, because they are not in any sense a part of the Christian system. They were for the fleshly seed of Abraham only and were abrogated along with the entire Mosaic Law at the death of our Lord.

(7) *The distinctions between the two covenants* may be stated briefly as follows: (a) The old was made with the fleshly seed of Abraham only. It was first announced to Abraham himself, and was later enlarged into a national covenant at the establishment of the Jewish theocracy at Sinai (Gen. 12: 1-3, 17: 1-8,

22: 15-18, Deut. 5: 2-5, etc.). It is generally known as the Abrahamic covenant. The new covenant, on the other hand, is an overture to all mankind, although its blessings and rewards are confined to those who comply with its conditions of membership (Matt. 28: 19-20, Acts 10: 34-35, 42-43, 17: 30-31).

(b) Moses was the mediator of the old covenant, Jesus of the new (Deut. 5: 5, Heb. 8: 6, 3: 1-6, 9: 18-28, 12: 24, etc.).

(c) The basis of membership in the old covenant was *fleshly*. It included those born in Abraham's house and those bought with Abraham's money, i.e., those born of Hebrew parents and those bought with Hebrew money and retained as slaves in Hebrew households (Gen. 17: 12). Naturally all such infants and heathen servants had to be taught to "know Jehovah" *after* they had been inducted into the covenant by circumcision. The basis of membership in the new covenant is *spiritual* (Jer. 31: 33-34, John 3: 1-6). Membership in the new covenant depends not on parentage, nor on race, but on spiritual birth. Under the new God must write His laws in our hearts and we must all know Him from the least unto the greatest in order to belong to the covenant. In other words one of the things absolutely necessary to participation in the blessings of the new covenant is that we know God by faith in Christ Jesus who came to reveal Him to us (John 14: 1, Rom. 10: 9-10, Acts 16: 31, etc.). We know Him by faith and appropriate the blessings of the covenant by obedience (Rom. 10: 17, 2 Thess. 1: 8, 1 Pet. 1: 22). If you ask, What about the salvation of infants?—my reply is that Jesus atoned for the innocent and the irresponsible, unconditionally, by His propitiation offered on Calvary, and those who die in infancy pass directly from the kingdom of innocence into the kingdom of glory (Rom. 5: 13, 1 John 3: 4, Matt. 19: 14, 18: 1-6). Hence we find no intimation of infant church membership in the apostolic writings. Infant baptism, infant christening and infant church membership are all by-products of post-apostolic theology.

(d) The seal of the old covenant was *fleshly circumcision* (Gen. 17: 9-14). The seal of the new covenant is the indwelling Spirit of God (2 Cor. 1: 22, Eph. 1: 13, 4: 30). This cutting off of the old sinful relationship and life by the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the obedient believer's heart is *spiritual circumcision*, (Acts 2: 38-39, Rom. 2: 28-29, Phil. 3: 3, Col. 2: 9-12, Eph. 1: 13-14).

(e) The old covenant was *national*, confined to just one people. The Mosaic code was a civil code for the government of the Jewish theocracy. In this sense the Law of Moses might be said to correspond to the civil statutes of the United States of America, and the Decalogue, which was the core of the Mosaic Law, to our federal Constitution (Deut. 5: 2-21). The tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were engraved were known as the tables of testimony, or the tables of the covenant (Exo. 24: 12, 32: 15-16, 31: 18; Deut. 4: 13, 5: 22, 10: 1-5). The new covenant is for all mankind; it has no geographical or racial limitations.

(f) The old covenant was local, i.e., adapted to a people living in a warm climate. Its

provisions pertained largely to matters of the flesh, "meats and drinks and divers washings, carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation" (Heb. 9: 10). How could any human being living in a cold climate obey the old covenant regulations respecting the observance of the Sabbath, one of which was that no fire was to be kindled on a Sabbath day? The commands of the new covenant are, on the other hand, essentially moral and spiritual in their nature, and can be obeyed by all people in all parts of the world. This is not only true as regards His ethical teaching, but equally so with respect to His ordinances, viz., baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's Day (Acts 2: 38, Gal. 3: 26-27). (g) The penalty for violating the old covenant was in most cases physical death. The penalty for refusing the overtures of the new covenant is spiritual death, or eternal separation from "the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1: 8-9, Rev. 20: 11-15). For instance, under the old covenant, adultery was a *crime* for which the death penalty was inflicted; under the new, it is a *sin* that will damn the soul. (h) The new covenant is a better covenant because it has been "enacted upon better promises" (Heb. 8: 6). Under the old, for instance, there was no actual remission of sins, for the simple reason that animal sacrifices were not a sufficient atonement for the guilt of sin (Heb. 10: 1-18). On each Day of Atonement the High Priest of Israel went into the Holy of Holies with the prescribed offerings for his own sins and for the sins of his people, in response to which God merely laid the guilt of their sins over to the next annual Day of Atonement, and so on throughout the entire Jewish dispensation. There was never any actual remission of sin, until the Son of God made a sufficient atonement "once at the end of the ages . . . by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9: 6-10, 23-28, Exo. 30: 10, Lev. 23). Under the new covenant, however, remission of sins is one of the promises of the gospel (Acts 2: 38, 10: 43). We have God's promise that on the condition of our own faith and continued obedience, He will be merciful with respect to our iniquities and will remember our sins against us no more (Heb. 8: 10-12, Jer. 31: 31-34). And let me add most emphatically that *when God forgives, He forgets*. (i) Under the old covenant there was no distinct assurance of future blessedness beyond the grave. Old Testament intimations of the future life are to say the least indefinite. But the Christian Scriptures speak with positiveness and finality on the subjects of heaven and immortality. Jesus pointed forward to the future life in such unmistakable terms as to leave no room for doubt, and the apostles are equally positive in their writings (John 11: 25-26, 10: 18; Acts 2: 36, 17: 31; Rom. 6: 23, 8: 11; 2 Cor. 5: 1-4; Phil. 3: 20-21; 1 Cor. 15, etc.). (j) The old covenant was negative throughout. The Ten Commandments have been called the "Thou-shalt-nots" of the Almighty. The contrast between the thunderings of God above Sinai announcing the prohibitions of the Decalogue, and the gentle accents of the Son of man proclaiming the Beatitudes,

in His "Sermon on the Mount," is an analogy of the distinction between the covenants. No wonder, then, that the new covenant is called "the royal law," and "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (Jas. 2: 8, 1: 25).

(8) The Decalogue was the foundation and very heart of the Law of Moses. Yet the Ten Commandments were nailed to the Cross along with the rest of the Law. They were not *abolished*, but *abrogated*: i.e., temporarily set aside, then reenacted, with one exception, in the New Testament. We as Christians are subject to the provisions of the Decalogue only to the extent that its fundamental ethical principles, which are necessarily permanent, have been reenacted as a part of the Christian system. When a man makes two wills, he may take certain provisions of the old will and reincorporate them into the new; and they continue to be binding, not because they were in the old, but because they are in the new. A careful survey of the apostolic writings reveals the fact that all of the Ten Commandments, with but one exception, have been reenacted in the Christian Scriptures with this fundamental difference, viz., in the old they are stated *negatively*, but in the new *positively*. The fourth commandment is not reenacted in the New Testament. There is no command in the apostolic writings that Christians should keep the Sabbath. The reason for this exception is obvious: We as Christians are to keep the *first* day of the week, the Lord's Day, instead of the seventh. The Lord's Day is a memorial of the resurrection of our Lord (Mark 16: 9, Acts 20: 7, Rev. 1: 10, Ps. 118: 22-24, Acts 4: 11-12, etc.). (Parallels: Exo. 20: 3—Acts 14: 15, 17: 24-31; Exo. 20: 4-6—1 John 5: 21; Exo. 20: 7—Jas. 5: 12; Exo. 20: 12—Eph. 6: 1-4; Exo. 20: 13—Rom. 13: 9-10, 1 John 3: 15; Exo. 20: 14—1 Cor. 6: 9-10; Exo. 20: 15—Eph. 4: 28; Exo. 20: 16—Col. 3: 9; Exo. 20: 17—Eph. 5: 3).

(9) A great many people seem to have the idea that all they need to do to be saved is to keep the Ten Commandments. This is a false and misleading notion. Keeping the Ten Commandments will make a man a respectable citizen and keep him out of jail, but he might keep all the Ten Commandments perfectly and still not be a Christian (Mark 10: 17-22). There is nothing in the Decalogue about Christ or His church. We might keep the Decalogue perfectly and never believe in Christ, never be baptized, never pray, never observe the Lord's Supper, never attend a Christian church. The Decalogue is not the gospel. Though essential to good morals, it is a very minor part of the Christian system of faith and worship. Moreover, Jesus made it quite clear that the Decalogue is spiritually inadequate when, in answer to a question propounded by His critics, He pointed out the two greatest commandments in the Law, and neither of the two is found among the Ten Commandments (Matt. 22: 35-40, Deut. 6: 5, Lev. 19: 18). In brief, one must keep the Ten Commandments to stay out of prison, but one might keep all of them and still fall far short of being a Christian.

(10) The Law was a *civil* code for the government of the old Jewish theocracy. It was never intended to be a permanent or universal spiritual code. It was "added," says Paul, i.e., added to the promise, "because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made" (Gal. 3: 19). The tendency of the Israelites to drift into the customs and practices of their idolatrous heathen neighbors occasioned the giving of the Law. The people became such habitual sinners that it became necessary to put them under a code of law, in order that they might know the eternal distinctions between right and wrong. Such is the purpose of law generally speaking: it is to define right and distinguish it from wrong. Law was never enacted to make people better, but for the purpose of *restraining the lawless and protecting the weak from the strong*. Therefore, what the Law could not do for man, God did for Him by a manifestation of His infinite grace in the person of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8: 3).

(11) To summarize: *God has made two wills*. The first was made with respect to the fleshly seed of Abraham, through the mediation of Moses. The last is an overture to all mankind, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. The old was ratified by the blood of animals at Sinai; the new was ratified by the precious blood of Jesus on Calvary. The death of our Lord abrogated the old and ratified the new at one and the same time. He nailed the Law to the Cross, and instituted the universal reign of Grace. God graciously permitted the Law to remain as a civil code for the government of the Jewish people down to the time of the downfall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70; but its binding force was removed when our Lord was crucified. One of the elementary principles of law is that a new will automatically abrogates all prior testaments. We today are under "the last will and testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." We are not under the Law, but under Grace; not under the bond written in ordinances, but under the perfect law of liberty, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (John 1: 17, Jer. 31: 31-34, Rom. 3: 21-31, Gal. 3: 15-29, 2 Cor. 3: 1-11; Heb. 8; Col. 2: 8-17, etc.).

2. *It intimates the fulfilment of Old Testament prediction regarding the Messiah*. I shall attempt here to list the prophetic utterances which are to be found in the classic, historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament, pertaining to the Messiah and His reign, which are fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. I shall follow the general arrangement used in *The System Bible*, Section II., Part I., pp. 63-79:

1. The Messiah is to be the Seed of a woman. Jesus of Nazareth was the only person who ever came before the world claiming to be the Seed of a woman *exclusively* (Gen. 3: 14-15; Gal. 4: 4; Matt. 1: 18-25; Luke 1: 26-35).

2. He was to come from the family of Shem (Gen. 9: 18, 27; Luke 3: 36).

3. He was to be the Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 12: 1-3, 22: 18, 26: 1-4, 28: 10-14; Num. 24: 17; Matt. 1: 1-2; Luke 3: 34; Acts 3: 25-26; Heb. 2: 16; Gal. 3: 16, 4: 22-28).

4. He was to hail from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49: 9-10; 1 Chron. 5: 2; Mic. 5: 2; Matt. 2: 3-6; Heb. 7: 14; Rev. 5: 5).

5. He was to be of the royal lineage of David (2 Sam. 7: 12-17, 23: 1-5; Ps. 89: 3-4, 34-37, 132: 10-17; Isa. 9: 7, 11: 1, 11: 10, 55: 3-4; Jer. 23: 5-6; Amos 9: 11; Matt. 1: 1, 9: 27, 21: 9, 22: 41-42; Rev. 5: 5, 22: 16).

6. While, according to the flesh, He was to be the Seed of a woman, and the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse and David, in order; yet He was to be known also as the Son of God. His deity is asserted as positively as His humanity (Ps. 2: 7; Heb. 1: 5; Ps. 45: 6-7; Heb. 1: 8-9; Ps. 102: 25, 110: 1).

7. He was to be born of a virgin (Isa. 7: 13-14, 49: 1; Mic. 5: 3; Matt. 1: 18-25; Luke 1: 26-35).

8. He was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David (Mic. 5: 2; Matt. 2: 1-11; Luke 2: 1-7; John 7: 40-42).

9. A forerunner was to prepare the world for His advent (Mal. 3: 1-2, 4: 5-6; Isa. 40: 3; John 1: 22-23; Mark 1: 1-7; Matt. 3: 1-3, 11: 9-11).

10. He was to possess the Holy Spirit without measure (Isa. 11: 1-9; John 3: 34).

11. His ministry was to be authenticated by miracles of mercy (Isa. 42: 1-7, Acts 10: 38).

12. He was to be betrayed by one of His disciples (Ps. 41: 9, Mark 14: 43-49; John 18: 1-5).

13. The betrayer was to return the thirty pieces of silver, the price of betrayal (Zech. 11: 12-13; Matt. 27: 3-10).

14. Another was to be chosen to fill the betrayer's place (Ps. 109: 8; Acts 1: 15-20).

15. His followers were to forsake Him in His hour of peril and suffering (Zech. 13: 7; Matt. 26: 31-56).

16. He was to be scourged, mocked and abused (Isa. 50: 6; John 19: 1; Mark 14: 65; Matt. 27: 27-31).

17. As the sacrificial Lamb of God He was to suffer in silence (Isa. 53: 4-7; John 1: 29; Mark 15: 2-5; Acts 8: 32-35).

18. He was to be crucified, and His hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22: 16; Luke 23: 33; Zech. 12: 10, 13: 6; Acts 2: 22, 23, 27).

19. Vinegar and gall were to be given Him to drink (Ps. 69: 20-21; Matt. 27: 33-34).

20. His executioners were to divide His garments (Ps. 22: 18; John 19: 23-24).

21. He was to endure the Cross even unto death (Ps. 22: 1-21; Matt. 27: 46; Luke 24: 25-27; Acts 26: 22-23).

22. He was to die (Isa. 53: 8; Luke 23: 46).

23. He was to make His grave with both the wicked and the rich (Isa. 53: 9). Jesus was crucified between criminals, and buried in a rich man's tomb (Matt. 27: 38, 27: 57-60).

24. Not a bone of His body was to be broken (Ps. 34: 20; John 19: 32-36).

25. He was to be raised from the dead (Ps. 16: 10, 17: 15; Jonah 1: 17; Matt. 12: 39-40; John 2: 19-22; Luke 24: 1-7; Acts 13: 34-37, 2: 23-28; 1 Cor. 15: 3-4).

26. He was to ascend to the Father in heaven (Ps. 8: 5-6, 110: 1; Luke 24: 50-53; Mark 16: 19; Eph. 4: 8-10; Heb. 13: 3).

27. He was to be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords (Ps. 24: 7-10, 2: 6; Acts 2: 33; Phil. 2: 9-11).

28. He was to send the Holy Spirit according to promise (Joel 2: 28-29; Acts 2: 1-33, 4: 31, etc.).

29. His second advent is also clearly predicted in the Old Testament and reemphasized in the New (Job 19: 25; Ps. 110: 6; Eccles. 12: 14; Dan. 7: 13-14, 12: 2-3; Mal. 4: 1-2; Matt. 24: 29-30, 25: 31-33, 26: 64; John 5: 28-29; Acts 1: 6-11, 17: 30-31; Heb. 9: 28; 1 Thess. 4: 13-18; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9; Rev. 20: 11-15, 21: 1-6, 21: 23-27, 22: 20).

30. The various phases of the Messiah's reign are prophetically described as follows: (1) The King enthroned (Ps. 2). (2) The King delights in obedience (Ps. 40: 6-10). (3) The King's bridal (Ps. 45). (4) The King in Peace (Ps. 72). (5) The King victorious (Ps. 110). (6) The everlasting kingdom (Isa. 9: 1-7). (7) The Spirit of God upon the King (Isa. 11: 1-9). (8) The victorious kingdom (Dan. 2: 36-45). (9) The universal kingdom (Dan. 7: 15-27).

31. The Messianic King is also portrayed in the Old Testament as God's chosen Servant: (1) The Servant's call (Isa. 42: 1-7). (2) His mission to all the world (Isa. 49: 1-9). (3) His work as comforter, and His sufferings (Isa. 50: 4-9). (4) His humiliation and exaltation (Isa. 52: 13-53: 12). (5) The Prince of Peace (Isa. 62: 11; Zech. 9: 9-10; Matt. 21: 1-9).

32. The various phases of the new covenant are also foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures. (1) It was to be a covenant which would provide remission of sins (Jer. 31: 31-34; Acts 3: 24-26, 2: 37-39). (2) It was to be a covenant of unity, a way of approach to the Father (Jer. 32: 38-40; Acts 4: 32-33; John 17: 20-21; Eph. 4: 4-6). (3) It was to be a covenant of that righteousness which is according to faith (Hab. 2: 4; Gal. 3: 11-13; Rom. 1: 16-17). (4) It was to be a covenant in which the Holy Spirit would be given to God's people (Ezek. 36: 25-28; Acts 2: 38-39). (5) It was to be a covenant for Gentiles as well as Jews (Isa. 11: 10, 49: 6, 19: 24-25; Acts 10: 34-35, 13: 45-47). (6) The people of this new covenant were to be called by a new name (Isa. 56: 5, 62: 2; Acts 11: 26). (7) The Messiah Himself was to be the Corner Stone of the church (Isa. 28: 16; Ps. 118: 22; Acts 4: 11-12; Eph. 2: 19-20).

A careful study of these many scriptures will reveal the fact that they have been, or are in the process of being fulfilled, in every single detail, in the public ministry, mission, priesthood and reign of Jesus of Nazareth as The Anointed

One of God. God spent four thousand years and more preparing the first gospel sermon that was delivered on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, and in preparing the world to receive that sermon. The fulfilment of all these gospel promises and hopes foretold by the Old Testament prophets is to be seen in the entire sweep of Christian history, beginning with the descent of the Spirit on that first Pentecost after the Resurrection, and continuing throughout the present dispensation, which is to come to an end when Jesus comes again. He came the first time as our suffering Savior; He will come a second time as the Judge of the living and the dead.

3. *It signifies the successful consummation of what is known in scripture as God's eternal purpose.*

(1) *Eph. 3: 3-12.* This eternal purpose was to incarnate the Word, in the fulness of time, that He might provide a sufficient atonement for sin; to establish the church, publish the gospel, and unite both Gentiles and Jews in the one body of Christ (*Eph. 2: 14-17; Acts 2: 23, 3: 18; Gal. 3: 22, etc.*). This foreknowledge of God, determinate counsel, eternal purpose, mystery, or secret, had in it Christ, the gospel, the church, justification of sinners by faith, and the incorporation of the Gentiles into the same body, thus making them partakers of the same promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. It included, in brief, the entire *remedial system*. This great mystery was not revealed unto the sons of men in past ages, as it has now been revealed through "his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (*1 Pet. 1: 10-12; Rom. 16: 25-26, etc.*). The gospel as preached by the apostles was the full and complete revelation of this divine mystery.

(2) This great mystery—the plan of redemption—existed at one time in the *purpose* of God only. The mysterious oracle in *Gen. 3: 15*, to the effect that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, was the first intimation of it. From Adam to Abraham, it existed in the *purpose* of God only, as yet unannounced. From Abraham to Isaiah, it existed in the *promise* of God. The Abrahamic promise contained Christ, the gospel, the church, the entire scheme of redemption (*Luke 1: 55; Gal. 3: 8-16; Rom. 4: 13, 16, etc.*). From Isaiah to Malachi, it existed in *prophecy*. During the personal ministries of John the Baptizer and Jesus, it was in a state of *preparation*. Then, when all things were ready, when the Son of God had been crowned Lord of all and invested with the scepter of the kingdom, this great mystery, this everlasting evangel, was sent down with the Holy Spirit from heaven and was proclaimed *as fact* for the first time on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30. The gospel consists of three facts, viz., the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*1 Cor. 15: 1-4*); and these facts

were proclaimed *as facts* for the first time, on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord (Acts 2; Heb. 2: 3-4).

(3) Let me say at this point that the Bible is not a text-book on science or philosophy, nor is it a history of the human race. The Bible is, or rather contains, *the history of redemption*, beginning with Adam and culminating in Jesus, the Head of the new creation (1 Cor. 15: 45). Technically speaking, the Bible is not a revelation from God, but rather the inspired and accurate record of a series of revelations. God revealed Himself and His eternal purpose *progressively*, and this revelation was handed down as man advanced in his capacity to receive and appreciate it. First, holy men of olden times spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, revealing such attributes of God as His self-existence, personality, unity and spirituality. Then came the prophets revealing His infinite wisdom, righteousness and holiness. Finally this revelation attained perfection in His Son, who was "the effulgence of his glory" and "the very image of his substance." It was the work of Jesus of Nazareth to reveal, primarily, God's infinite love and compassion. Love was the last attribute of Himself which the Deity revealed to His creatures. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us that we might apprehend in some measure and appropriate the blessings of God's love for us (John 14: 5-11; Heb. 1: 1-4; John 3: 16).

(4) The New Testament is God's final and complete revelation of Himself to mankind. In it is revealed the faith *once for all* delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). God fully revealed Himself in His only begotten Son, and the record of that revelation has been faithfully set down and preserved for us in the Christian Scriptures, by men who were infallibly guided by the Spirit of God. Hence, in the words of Simon Peter, with this final revelation embodied in the apostolic writings, *all things pertaining to life and godliness were given* (2 Pet. 1: 3). Revelation ceased with the apostles, because there was nothing more to be revealed; and when revelation came to an end, inspiration ceased also. The death of Jesus on the Cross was the culmination of the entire redemptive process, the perfect flower of that heavenly plant which budded in the Patriarchal dispensation and blossomed in the Jewish. When the Son of God made the Supreme Sacrifice on Golgotha's barren crest, He said all that could be said on the subject of God's love for man. When He cried, "It is finished," He meant that He had successfully consummated this great mystery, gloriously executed this eternal purpose which had originated in the mind of the heavenly Father even before the foundation of the world. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3: 16). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15: 13). "Beloved, if God so loved us, so we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4: 9-11).

"Could I with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
And every stick on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God for man
Would drain the ocean dry;
The whole would not contain the scroll,
Though stretched from sky to sky."

With these facts before us we can now realize something of the tremendous import of the incident which occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration, to which I call your attention in closing. We read that "after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them into a high mountain apart; and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah, talking with him" (Matt. 17: 1-8). What a gathering that was!—and what an unforgettable experience it must have been to those three bewildered apostles! To see Moses standing there, the great Lawgiver and Mediator of the Old Testament, who had been buried centuries before somewhere on the slopes of Mount Nebo, and whose sepulchre is unknown to this day; and, at his side, Elijah, the fiery prophet who had defied the priests of Baal at Mount Carmel, one who had never tasted death, but who had been taken to heaven from the east side of Jordan in a chariot of fire! There they stand, conversing with the Lord Jesus, who is transfigured and presented before them as He would appear today, if we could but see Him, clothed in His garments of celestial glory! Moses, representing the school of the Law; Elijah, representing the school of the Prophets; and Peter, James and John, representing the school of the Apostles! Luke tells us that the subject of their conversation was the Lord's death "which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9: 31). Peter, in the ecstasy of the moment, cried: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles: one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Poor, weak, impulsive, yet lovable Simon Peter! Rushing in as usual where angels dared not tread; forgetting, under the spell of that transcendent mountain-top experience, the work which must be done down in the valley among the sorrowing, sin-stricken sons of men! Then, just as Peter

finished speaking, a cloud overshadowed them, and there came a voice from the most excellent glory, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" with the added injunction, "Hear ye him."

How tremendously significant this final command! "Hear ye him!" Law, hear ye Him! Prophecy, hear ye Him! Apostolate, hear ye Him! Angelic hosts, hear ye Him! Heaven and earth, hear ye Him! Saint and sinner alike, hear ye Him! Law is about to be abrogated—in Him; prophecy is about to be fulfilled—in Him; redemption is about to be offered a dying world—in Him! Therefore, hear Him, obey Him, in whom these glorious enterprises are to be consummated! For unto Him all authority in heaven and on earth shall be given, after all things shall have been accomplished. He is Sovereign of the universe. He has already all authority in the physical universe, for "He is before all things, and in him all things consist" (Col. 1: 17). And He will soon be made Head over all things to the church. Then, having been vested with all authority, both in the world of matter and in the world of spirit, *in all things He shall have the pre-eminence* (Col. 1: 18).

The Cross was the climax, the culmination, the realization of everything that God planned from before the foundation of the world! The dreams, hopes and aspirations of mankind are all centered in Calvary!

"It was not a bolt of gold,
But only a cross of wood,
Yet the bliss can never be told,
When its meaning is understood.

"It speaks of the mountains crossed,
The crooked and rough made plain,
Of the climax of toil and cost
That brings man to God again."

My sinner friend, it was all for you! He died of a broken heart—for you! He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross—for you! Your sins crucified Him! What are you going to do about it? What are you going to give Him in return? Will you not now give Him your body, soul, and spirit—your very *all*? Will you not come to Him for mercy and pardon now, while we sing the hymn of invitation?

XVI.

The Nail-Pierced Hands

Scripture Reading.—John 20: 19-30.

Text.—" . . . he showed unto them his hands . . ." John 20: 20.

THE STORY OF THIS APPEARANCE of Jesus to His disciples. "He showed unto them his hands," etc.

1. *Think of the tender, inspiring memories those hands recalled.*

"Sacred, tender, inspiring memories were connected with those hands. They had toiled at the carpenter's bench and had helped in the countless ministries of the home of His youth. They had held little children and they had been laid on their heads in blessing; they had anointed the eyes of a blind man that he might see; they had divided the loaves and fishes so that five thousand were fed. These hands had touched a leper for his healing; Peter had been lifted by them from the waves of the sea; they had washed the disciples' feet; they had wielded the whip of cords to drive out the profaners of the temple, and many another deed of divine love and justice had been wrought by them. Most often, we may believe, would the minds and hearts of His followers dwell on the Lord's breaking the bread and pouring the wine at the Last Supper, witnessing to the gift of Himself on the Cross where those hands were to be nailed, and afterward to be lifted in testimony to His death and resurrection" (Charles DeW. Brower, *Christian Herald*, April 10, 1926).

2. *Think of the eternal good news symbolized by His nail-pierced hands.*

(1) The good news of His suffering *for the sins of the world*. The mystery of the Atonement was the mystery of His own personality. Not merely that He died, but that He was Incarnate Deity offering up His body as a propitiation. Without the miracle of the Incarnation, His death would have been nothing but a martyrdom; with it, His death was an all-sufficient atonement for the sins of humanity. The difference between martyrdom and Atonement is as the difference between earth and heaven.

(2) The good news that He suffered *for all mankind*. Thus His death becomes personal for each of us. "I know mine own, and mine own know me . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10: 14-15). "It was for me."

(3) The good news of a *new and better covenant* established

upon better promises (2 Cor. 3; Heb. 8). His eating with the disciples was prophetic of His entering into this new covenant; and at the time He ate with them He ordained the memorial feast which is the very heart and center of this new covenant and its worship (Luke 22: 19-20). When we eat and drink together at the Lord's Table, we are partaking of and renewing a blood covenant to which He was faithful even unto death, and to which we pledge ourselves to be equally faithful.

(4) The good news of His *resurrection from the dead*. When doubting Thomas saw those nail-pierced hands, he cried, "My Lord and my God!" No longer was he faithless, but believing.

3. *The nail-pierced hands witness to the attracting power of His cross.* Only the most hardened and impenitent heart can resist the "gospel of the nail-pierced hands."

"We recall the conversion of the great leader of the Moravian brethren, Count Zinzendorf, who, standing before a picture of Christ, was touched to the heart by the words written below: '*All this I did for thee; what hast thou done for me?*' We shared in sending the Lord of glory to the Cross. It was at the cross that the burden of our sins rolled away, and it is for us, with strong, immortal gratitude, to give ourselves to Him in loving, living sacrifice" (Charles DeW. Brower, *ibid.*).

Those nail-pierced hands are both the picture and the proof of the unfathomable love of the sinless One who gave up the glories of heaven for three years of service in the flesh (John 1: 14, Phil. 2: 5-8), and who paid the price of our redemption by bearing our sins upon His body on the Tree. He stands here now with His nail-pierced hands outstretched towards you, my sinner friend, in loving invitation. He says yearningly: "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." His hands are knocking at the door of your heart. Will you not open it now to receive Him?

XVII.

The Blood of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Heb. 9: 11-28.

Text.—"and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission."
Heb. 9: 22.

THIS CRIMSON THREAD
of blood runs throughout God's entire revelation to man.

It first appeared when animals were slain to provide a covering for the nakedness of our first parents (Gen. 3: 21). It appeared again in Abel's propitiatory sacrifice, through which he "being dead yet speaketh." It appeared in every sacrifice thereafter laid upon the Patriarchal and Jewish altars. It appeared upon the door-post of every Jewish habitation in ancient Egypt on the night the death angel passed over that stricken land. It appeared in the sprinkling of blood upon the people, upon the book of the covenant, and upon the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry, when the old covenant was ratified at Mount Sinai. It appeared in all the ceremonial washings of the old covenant dispensations. It appeared in the Cup which was sanctified by the lips of our Lord on the memorable evening of the Last Supper. And it appeared in all its efficacy when He died on the cross, ratifying the new covenant, and at the same time abrogating the old, providing thereby a remedy for sin. "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7). "There are three who bear witness, the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three agree in one" (1 John 5: 8).

It appears symbolically in the cup of the Lord's Supper which was kept by the primitive Christians on the first day of the week—the very heart and center of their worship. In instituting this sacred ordinance, Jesus took the cup filled with rich red fruit of the vine, and blessing it, said: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. 26: 28). "The cup of blessing which we bless," adds Paul, "is it not a communion"—i.e., a sharing together and a sharing alike—"of the blood of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10: 16). This cup pictures the bitter suffering unto death which He suffered, the baptism with which He was baptized, on a lonely hill back of Jerusalem.

We are told, too, that this divine institution, the Lord's Supper, witnesses to the first great fact of the gospel. "For as often as ye eat the bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11: 26). What is this gospel? Paul defines it for us: "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you. . . . For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and

that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 1-4). The first great fact of the gospel is that "Christ died for our sins.

This has been preached and believed in all ages—that Christ died for our sins; that the only remedy for sin is the blood of Jesus, and the only means of application is through the preaching and hearing of the gospel and the obedience of faith; that faith takes away the love of sin, repentance destroys the practice of sin, baptism transfers the penitent believer from a sinful state into a state of grace, pardon cleanses from the guilt of sin, and resurrection will ultimately remove us from the presence of sin. These matters have been proclaimed and accepted as gospel truth in all ages of the history of Christendom.

But these propositions are being challenged by so-called modern "liberalists." We are told by these self-styled "prophets of the dawn" that Christianity is not a revelation from God, but on the contrary of the human intellect, an outgrowth of the human aspiration. We are told that Jesus was just a specially illumined man, and nothing more; that He is our Savior only in the sense that He led a sacrificial life; that the only saving efficacy in His ministry lies in the power of His example; and that salvation is to be achieved through the education of the human race prompting the human personality to reach up for higher and still higher standards and ideals.

According to the Bible, man is a sinner and under the condemnation of divine law. In this condition he was powerless to save himself. And because God loved him so much, He sent His only begotten Son to suffer and die that a sufficient atonement might be provided for him. God, in His infinite grace, thus did for man what man could not do for himself. Jesus came to die for man, and in man's stead, offering His body as a propitiation for man's sins. The Cross is the very heart and center of the Christian system, and the death of Jesus is the focal point around which all revelation revolves.

The Bible teaches that man was placed on this earth as a fully-developed personality possessing all the elements of spirit which were "breathed" into him from the very essence of God. In this original state of innocence, he knew good and evil only in the abstract, and not as matters of experience. He was therefore placed in a most pleasant environment in which everything was calculated to contribute to his happiness. But being a free moral being he was also placed under a law—one quite simple and elementary. Into this Eden came the Tempter with deceit and lying, to which he listened, and through which he was induced to violate the command of his Creator. As a result of his disobedience, sin entered his heart and he became an alien to God. Unfortunately this experience of Adam and Eve has been repeated in the life of every accountable being from that day to this. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3: 23).

Such is the Scripture presentation of the case and its explanation of the origin of sin upon the earth. But we are now told that this is all legend, nothing more; that man did not fall, or that if he did fall, he fell upward instead of downward. According to the modern theory, life started out in a germinal state, then developed through the operation of "resident forces" into higher and still higher forms, finally attaining its pinnacle in the human personality. From that marvelous "primordial cell," life battled its way upward, first through tadpoles, then flying lizards, then the birds of the air, and the beast of the field, then the anthropoid ape and finally man. Man did not fall, says this theory; on the contrary he started out in a state of savagery, from which he has struggled upward through the centuries, until by means of science, experience and education, he has attained his present enlightened state. If this process of evolution continues, we may safely assume that he will ultimately attain the status of a demigod or that of the "Super-man" of recent German philosophy.

This theory, by the way, is wonderfully soothing to man's pride. The "I-love-me" spirit is quite prominent in his make-up. If science inflates human pride in the next century as it has in the present century, man will soon be discontented with life as he must live it on this planet, which Voltaire has called "the lunatic asylum of the universe," and to which our geographies refer dryly and unimaginatively as "the earth." I fear that he will become like the old farmer out in Kansas who became quite well-to-do in war times. Prosperity enlarged his head, as it frequently does, it seems. This farmer owned a fine hog and he wanted the world to know about it. So he painted the following sign and nailed it to the front gate-post: "If you want to see the finest and biggest hog in Kansas, stop here and see me. Silas Jones." Pride usually causes a man to make a fool of himself sooner or later. I fear that this is what pride is doing for the entire human race in this twentieth century.

I am not sure, after all, that man has made such tremendous progress on this planet. Archaeology and history both prove that the earliest-known men were far superior in physique to their kind of the present day. The same is true of the animal creation. There are no living animals that can be compared with the Clyptodons and Mammoths of prehistoric ages. The greatest beasts on exhibition in any modern menagerie are midgets as compared with the dinosaurs of primeval times. The first man lived to be 930 years old. Noah lived 950 years. But as time passed we find Abraham dying at the age of 175, Moses at 120, and Samson, evolution's best example, at the age of 40. David was about 75 when he died, and Solomon, wisest and healthiest of all, was only 55. Until evolution can explain these facts, as well as the inferiority of modern civilizations in comparison with those of the ancients, its advocates stand in need of a new creed. We have nothing today that compares with the arts and sciences of ancient Egypt, Greece

and Rome. True, we excel in mechanical invention, and in moral and spiritual idealism—thanks to the uplifting power of the Christian religion. But when this is said, all has been said. I am inclined to the view that both history and observation corroborate the Scripture statement that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

1. In discussing this important theme of “the blood of the covenant,” the first observation I would make is that we are dealing with the problem of *the Atonement*. But what do we mean by *Atonement*?

The only instance where the English word *atonement* occurs in the Christian Scriptures is in Romans 5: 11: “through whom we have now received the atonement,” *Authorized Version*. The American Standard Version more correctly renders this, “reconciliation.” *The Scofield Reference Bible* recommends “reconciliation,” also. The Old Testament Hebrew word, translated atonement, is *kaphar*, which means literally “to cover.” In one form or another this word occurs repeatedly in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and elsewhere. The Jewish Scriptures teach that through the shedding of the blood of sacrificial animals, the sins of believing Israelites were “covered” for the time being, until such a time as God might deal with them eternally. These Old Testament offerings were of course typical of the Supreme Offering on Calvary (Heb. 9: 12).

The term means literally, *at-one-ment*. It implies the healing of parts once at variance. It is equivalent to *reconciliation*. As applied to religion, it means that something came between God and man, causing misunderstanding, alienation, schism. That something was *sin*. And what is sin? Sin, says John, is lawlessness (1 John 3: 4). God created man in innocence; He therefore placed him under law. The law was quite elementary. But man broke the law, and when he did so, rebellion entered his heart. With rebellion came also a guilty conscience, and when God “came down” into the Garden to talk with him, as He had been wont to do, he tried to hide his face from the Creator. His sense of guilt was so strong within him that he avoided communion with his Heavenly Father.

It is a law of nature, as you know, that when you do a man an injury, you avoid him, you instinctively become his enemy. The still, small voice of conscience chastises you, and you resent it. You resort to self-pity. You vent your spleen on the person whom you have injured. So, when man sinned, he became an enemy of God, and in so doing he became an enemy of good. In becoming the enemy of good he became his own enemy. Man’s greatest enemy is *self*, as every one here will testify. So he plunged downward. He became alienated from God, not as a consequence of Adam’s sin, not as a consequence of the sins of his fathers, but as a consequence of *his own* sins. He became alienated from God by his own wicked works (Col. 1: 21).

Now Atonement was that essential act of grace (grace being "unmerited favor") which made it possible for this alienation to be overcome, this chasm between God and man to be bridged, and for Creator and creature to become reconciled, that they might enjoy the same loving intimacy and communion which they enjoyed in Eden prior to man's temptation and fall.

Someone may ask: "Do you mean that God was angry towards His children, and thought to smite them with a blow; but that the blow intended for them fell upon the shoulders of His only begotten Son?" I mean nothing of the kind. God is the Creator and Preserver of this universe and as such is responsible for the enforcement of His own laws. But law, in order to be law, must have a *penalty*, and if the law is violated, the penalty must be enforced in order to sustain the law. He who violates a law becomes subject to its penalty. Suppose you are walking down a street some night—a dark street. A thug sticks a gun in your face and starts to assault you. You may successfully repel the assailant and prevent the hold-up, by strategy. Then in a moment of compassion you might think, I will be merciful and let this affair pass by. I will not report this man. I have no desire to send any one to prison. But suppose a policeman has seen the attack. If he does his duty he will arrest the assailant. He is the custodian of the law and his sworn duty is to enforce it. Likewise the judge, as guardian of the majesty of the law, is obliged to assess the penalty if he does his duty. Now, would that policeman or that judge be held responsible for the man's imprisonment? I think not. It is the law, and the authority behind the law, that demands the execution of the penalty. So God placed man under divine law. Man fully understood its penalty. Yet he disobeyed the law. Therefore, not in anger, but in infinite pity, God proceeded to enforce the penalty. Yet even in the enforcement of the penalty He tempered justice with mercy.

2. Atonement is therefore both an act of grace, and a consummation of love. Grace provides, but love inspires. Grace covers, but love redeems.

Here then was a two-fold problem. Man had spurned the majesty of the greatest law in the universe. The majesty of the law had to be maintained. On the other hand, God loved man too much to allow him to be lost forever. Yet man was in a state of rebellion. How was this rebellion to be overcome, and the majesty of the law sustained, at the same time? There was one—and only one—way by which it could be done: by an incomparable manifestation of divine love, a divine offering that would demonstrate God's love for man and thus overcome the rebellion in his heart, and that would at the same time demonstrate by its sheer costliness the sublimity of the law which had been violated. As great as this problem was, the

solution had already been worked out in the counsels of the Godhead.

Let me call your attention again to the important fact that it was a *divine* law which had been violated. Disobedience to *human* law incurs a *human* penalty and necessitates a *human* offering, in the form of an assessment, imprisonment, and at times life itself. There was nothing—absolutely nothing—that man could do in the matter of providing an atonement for his transgression of the law of God. He had nothing within himself sufficient for such an atonement. At this point God's *love* manifested itself, *in that what man could not do for himself God did for him*. God provided a divine offering, an offering sent down from heaven. God selected His own dear Son and offered Him freely for us all. The Son—willingly, if you please—came down from heavenly glory and offered Himself as a propitiation for sin. Let me repeat that He did it *willingly, voluntarily*. His death on Calvary's tree sustained the majesty of the divine law and fully demonstrated God's immeasurable love for man (John 3: 16; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Rom. 4: 25; 1 Pet. 2: 24, etc.).

We overlook the fact I think that God is holy, and therefore hates sin. He cannot tolerate sin. He cannot condone sin. He cannot ignore sin. He must deal with it. He would be unrighteous were He to fail to deal with it. Calvary is a demonstration not only of the intensity of God's love, but also of the awfulness of sin. Our sins nailed the Son of God to the cross—don't forget that!

I read an account not so long ago of two young men who grew up together in the same community in Virginia. They became fast friends, but unfortunately both fell in love with the same young woman. When she married the man of her choice, the other accepted the decision like a gentleman, protesting his affection for both of them. The Civil War came on. The married man had a large family—the other had never married. The married man was called into the Union army. He hesitated about going to the front and leaving his family without any means of support. While he was hesitating, his faithful friend went to the recruiting officer and enlisted in the married man's place, as a *substitute*. He fell in battle. And the other man went across the country to find his grave, and when he found it, over it he erected a monument with this inscription: "He died for me." That, my friend, is exactly what Christ did for you. He died for you. Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

The sweetest portrayal of human love to be found in all literature, I believe, is presented in *A Tale of Two Cities*, by Dickens. As the story goes, Sydney Carton loved a young woman, who became the wife of one of his dearest friends, a man by the name of Charles Darnay. One day the French Revolution broke out over Paris in all its fury. Darnay was torn from his wife and thrown into the Bastille, to be guillotined. On the day set for the execution, Sydney Carton made

his way into the prison by stealth, and by means of a ruse succeeded in exchanging clothes with Darnay and causing the latter to be spirited away in his own carriage; and when the executioner's wagon called a few minutes afterward it bore Carton instead of Darnay. And as the horrible knife fell to sever Sydney Carton's head from his body, the vibrant words of the Master filled his heart with unspeakable joy: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And "they said of him, about the city that night, that it was the peaceablest man's face ever beheld there. Many added that he looked sublime and prophetic." Sydney Carton died for the woman he loved and for her husband as well. Greater love hath no man than this.

This is exactly what the Savior did for you and for me. He did not do it because He *had* to. He was under no obligation to mankind. He did it voluntarily. He did it willingly. He did it freely. Because He loves us, He made the supreme sacrifice for us. This was the supreme sacrifice because no mere human being could have provided such an atonement as the circumstances of this case required. But our Savior was the God-man, the Divine-human Person. His propitiation was sufficient for all time and for all mankind (Heb. 9: 26).

3. We come now to a very important question: *Where and how does blood enter into this matter of reconciliation?* What is the philosophy of blood offerings? How is blood associated with the doctrine of Atonement?

God made this clear in ancient times (Lev. 17: 11). This means that *life* is in the blood. An offering of life requires the shedding of precious blood. Moreover, life is a heavenly gift, and an offering of life becomes therefore a divine offering.

When an atonement for sin became necessary, it had to be an offering of life. But an offering of life necessitated a death and the shedding of blood. Hence we find that God caused animals to be slain as soon as man fell, no doubt to establish the principle that apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission (Gen. 3: 21). No doubt the law of sacrifice was given at that time, requiring an offering of blood. Abel obeyed this law, bringing to the altar an offering of "the firstlings of his flock" (Gen. 4: 4). Cain presumptuously disobeyed God in this respect and brought an offering of the ground in which there was no shedding of blood. Cain's offering was rejected, and Abel's accepted. From that time on every lamb slain on Patriarchal and Jewish altars represented an offering of life, and was a blood offering; and every offering was typical of the Supreme Offering that was to be made at the end of the ages by the Lamb of God who offered Himself up as a lamb without spot and without blemish.

Throughout the old covenant, atonement was substitutionary and typical, not actual; but on the ratification of the new covenant, through the shedding of the precious blood of Jesus, atonement became an actual fact. Under the old covenant, therefore, because there was no actual atonement, there was no actual remission of sin; but under the new, after a satisfactory propitiation had been provided by the God-man Himself, remission of sin became one of the first promises of the gospel, as announced by Simon Peter in the first gospel sermon preached by him on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 38). Under the new covenant God has promised to remit the guilt of His people and to remember their sins against them no more forever. And *when God forgives, He forgets.*

We have here the explanation of the term *redemption*. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. This is the legal phase of the matter. Christ bought us with His own precious blood. He offered Himself as a living sacrifice, in order to purchase our lives and to make possible eternal life for us. Eternal life for the Christian does not begin when he dies; it begins here and now, when the penitent believer is "born again" (1 John 5: 12).

Robert G. Ingersoll had considerable to say, in his numerous tirades against Christianity, about what he called "blood religion." He referred to the Christian faith, if I remember correctly, as a "slaughter-house religion." One of the favorite sports of our modern "intellectuals" is that of ridiculing the idea of blood atonement. All of which merely proves the gross ignorance of agnosticism, infidelity and Unitarianism. Their blindness of soul, their incapacity to comprehend spiritual truths, to look beyond the figure of speech and see the sublime truth exemplified in it, is astonishing. The blood which on that darkest day in the world's history oozed and flowed from the brow, the side, the hands and the feet of the Son of God, and stained the tree upon which He hung, in a few hours had coagulated, dried up and disappeared forever. If man had to depend on the *literal* application of the blood of Jesus for salvation, none could be saved. It is only by *faith* that we, as aliens, can appropriate and enjoy the cleansing merits of the blood of our Redeemer.

4. Aside from the legal phases of the problem as herein discussed, *the blood of Jesus stands for the principle of substitution, or what is known as vicarious sacrifice.* The word "vicarious" means "representing another." I frequently hear people speak of vicarious sacrifice as if it were something new, something abnormal, something distressingly unusual, something eccentric, a solitary episode in the history of man. *As a matter of fact, vicarious suffering and sacrifice are as old as the human race.*

I could take you over this city tonight and show you case after case of what the theologians have termed vicarious suffering. Suppose we were to take a trip through the factories, warehouses and offices of our city tomorrow. We would find there men who by their looks show they are overworked. They are prematurely old. They have gone through business crashes which have shattered their nerves. They have weariness of heart, pains in the head and shortness of breath. Why are they drudging early and late? For amusement? No. Because of avarice? No—a few hundred dollars would meet all their needs. Then why do they toil and suffer and die? They do it for a little home somewhere on a quiet street, where lives a faithful companion and three or four little children, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. There is an invisible line stretching from shop, office, factory, scaffold, and mill, to a little place called home where love has built a nest. What is this but vicarious sacrifice—the foundation principle upon which all human society is constructed.

At two o'clock in the morning, when slumber has settled down over our city, take a walk through the residential districts. Yonder you will see a light burning clearly. Why? Inside that house a little child is lying on its sick-bed, burning with fever, tossing to and fro in delirium. And by its side sits the mother, silently watching—and waiting for the crisis to pass. This is the sixth or seventh night she has sat up with her little one. The father is snatching a little sleep in order that he may keep on working to provide the funds to pay the doctor, the druggist, the grocer and the landlord. The poor mother has obeyed the doctor's orders carefully—she has done all she can do. Her eyes are red with weeping. She weeps and prays, each prayer ending in a sob as she kisses the little white cheek. And so she keeps on keeping on, patiently, prayerfully, lovingly, until the crisis passes. Then after it is all over, she is stricken with disease. Her strength is gone. And one day she leaves her little one with a mother's blessing and goes on to be with another babe who has preceded her into the gardens of God. There are uncounted mothers in this world who, after guiding a large family through the diseases of childhood, and sheltering them from the temptations of youth, have strength enough left only to lie down and die. Some call it tuberculosis, others nervous prostration. But God calls it vicarious sacrifice. Life for life!

Or perhaps a mother lingers long enough to see her son grow up and get into bad company. He starts on that short road to ruin over which the Prodigal traveled in the story of Jesus. When she expresses anxiety about him, he gives her a rough answer. But she goes right on, mending his clothes, remembering every birthday with a gift, preparing the food he likes, and never getting a word of thanks in return. And when he is finally brought home, worn out by dissipation, she nurses him back to health, and sends him out again, hoping and praying for the best. Then when she is about to go over

the great divide, and friends bending over her bedside ask her if she has any message to leave behind, she struggles to say something, and out of her incoherent mumblings they glean these words, "My poor, poor boy!" She died for him. She gave her life for him—the innocent for the guilty. Life for life—blood for blood! She died of a broken heart! So did Jesus. His people rejected Him, one of His disciples betrayed Him, another denied Him, the city of His love refused Him, and His own people reviled Him. He died of a broken heart!

I repeat that this principle of vicarious suffering is the foundation upon which civilization has been built—in fact upon which all society has been built, civilized or uncivilized. It is also the essential principle of human progress towards that one, far-off divine event, towards which the whole creation moves. Not so many years ago there went forth from our homes thousands of fine young men. They crossed the rolling deep and pitched their tents on Flanders fields and in the valleys of the Argonne. When they started out, many thought it would be a lark. But the poetry of war soon vanished, and nothing was left but the prose. They lived in dug-outs. They marched and ate and slept in mud. They rushed into living hells. They had ribs fractured, eyes put out, lungs filled with gas, limbs shot away. Thousands cried for water as they lay dying on the battlefields, and received it not. They were cold and weary and homesick. No one but Almighty God knows the length and breadth and depth of the awful anguish and suffering of those who fought, bled and died on those European battlefields. Why did fathers leave their homes and go to the front? Why did young men, postponing the day of marriage, press the last, long, lingering kisses upon the lips of their sweethearts, and then rush away into war with its uncertain future? I am still convinced that *they died for a principle*. I refuse to believe that it was all in vain—that sacrifice is ever in vain. There may have been greed, graft and corruption mixed up with all of it, but there was nobility, too! Autocracy had to be overthrown, lest our own wives and daughters might have to suffer what the innocent women and children of Belgium and France suffered. The war had its sordid side, of course; but surely all this bloodshed was not meaningless! A thousand times; yea, ten thousand times—no! I still believe that these men suffered to advance the cause of democracy and freedom.

In fact there has never been an upward movement in the history of the world, a movement for the liberation of the peoples of this earth, that has not been achieved through the shedding of precious blood. Man's forward march from lower to higher ideals is written on the roadways of history in footprints of blood. Sacrifice is that divine principle which pervades all human history. Man is not animated by a pushing power—on the contrary, he has ever been drawn upward

by a tremendous pulling power exerted from above. Attraction, not evolution, is the guiding principle in human development. And it is a law of progress, as truly as of divine revelation, that apart from the shedding of blood there is no redemption.

As for me I glory in the crimson line. I am thrilled when I read its suggestive meaning in the cup of the Lord's Supper. I am moved with an unexplainable ecstasy when I see the ancient altars dripping with the blood of the slain lambs. Now I understand why the destroying angel who passed over Egypt at the hour of midnight, passed over those houses where the blood was sprinkled on the door-post. Now, I know to whom Isaiah refers, when he writes of One "in red apparel coming in dyed garments;" whom John the Revelator refers to, when he describes that heavenly chieftain whose vesture was dipped in blood; what Simon Peter means when he writes of that precious blood which cleanseth from all sin; and what the writer of our text has in mind when he declares that "apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission."

I want to say to you, with all the power of emphasis and persuasion of which I am capable, that by the precious blood of Jesus you will be saved, or you will never be saved at all. In all ages God has never pardoned a single sin-sick soul except on the merits of our Savior's precious blood, and *He never will*. That lonely hill back of Jerusalem was the battleground on which the Prince of heaven fought with the powers of darkness, and won. There God turned an evil thing into a channel of infinite blessing. There, Sin, in slaying the Son of God, slew itself.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

5. Now for a practical and very important matter, in closing. We know of course that the blood of Jesus cannot be applied *literally* to our souls, for two reasons: (1) One is that His blood was actually shed when He died on the cross, some two thousand years ago, and that it coagulated, dried up and disappeared forever, at that time. (2) The second is that it would be impossible to apply actual physical blood to a *spiritual* entity. *Where, then, and in what manner, do we meet the blood of Jesus?* Preachers will glibly proclaim that we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus—which is true; but the great majority have no conception whatever, of when, where, and how that blood is applied.

Yet the New Testament is just as clear on this matter as on all others pertaining to our salvation. We appropriate the

merits of His shed blood *by faith*. We must accept Him as the Christ and our personal Savior, and confess Him as such before witnesses (Acts 16: 31; Rom. 10: 9-10; Matt. 16: 16; Heb. 11: 6; Matt. 10: 32-33, etc.). Then we meet the cleansing blood of Jesus when, as penitent believers, *we actually enter the covenant which has been sealed with His blood*. Where, and in what specific act, does this take place?

Again the New Testament is very clear in its answer to our inquiry. The blood of Jesus flowed *when He died*, did it not? Then, in order to come under His blood, *we must die with Him*. Whereas He died to the world of the flesh, we die to the world of sin. We must be crucified unto the world, as Paul said of himself, and the world crucified unto us.

Where, then, do believing penitents die to the world of sin? You will recall that when the Roman soldiers came to the Cross and found that Jesus was dead, one of them thrust a spear into His side, and what flowed from the wound? *Blood and water!* And the only place where you and I *can* die to the world of sin, the only place where it has been revealed that we can come into the covenant which was ratified by His blood, the only place where we can meet the blood of Jesus, *is in the grave of water!*

Shame on that individual who would profanely speak of Christian baptism as a "rite," or "form!" Such is the spirit of Cain who so presumptuously disregarded the spiritual significance of the ordinance of sacrifice! Christian baptism is not a "form"—our Lord instituted no "forms" in His teaching. Neither is it a rite or a ceremony. It is, rather, that divine appointment wherein Almighty God meets the penitent believer with a certificate of pardon!

Paul makes this all clear in the sixth chapter of the Roman letter. He is writing here about Christian baptism, and nothing else. He says: "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We *who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?* Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk *in newness of life.*" Let me thunder it into your ears that in Christian baptism we do not die *symbolically*, but we die *literally*. We die to the world of sin, to the old sinful relationship, the state of alienation. We arise from the water in a new relationship with God our Father, through Christ Jesus. Baptism is the consummation of our marriage to Christ. Hence the Apostle continues: "For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; *knowing this*, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; *for he that hath died is justified from sin*" (Rom. 6: 1-7). This is all very clear. Christian baptism, so far as its pictorial aspect is con-

cerned, is a likeness or picture of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord; yet in Christian baptism the penitent believer actually and literally dies to sin, actually and literally becomes united with Christ or married to Him. In this divine appointment God meets him with the pardon of his sins, so that he arises out of the grave of water *justified from sin*, a new creature in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3: 27, 6: 15; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Rom. 8: 1, etc.).

This explains what Ananias meant when he said to the penitent Saul of Tarsus: "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22: 16). Saul was a believer when Ananias first visited him. His experience before the gates of Damascus had moved him to exclaim, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He was not only a believer, but he was a *penitent* believer, too. He had been praying for three days, praying as a Jew prayed of course, praying for light and life, when Ananias found him. There was just one thing left for him to do to become a child of God—to be baptized and thus "wash away" his sins. Not that water washes away sin; of course not—any more than that blood is applied to the soul, i.e., in a literal sense! But that in the grave of water, he met the efficacy of the blood of Jesus in the pardon for sin which he received therein, in which sense the blood of Jesus did actually wash away his sins! And this experience enabled him to say, later, to the Christians in Rome, "*We* were buried therefore with him through baptism into death." How could language be plainer?

We therefore rightly sing, as our favorite baptismal litany, as each believing penitent goes down into the grave of water, is buried from mortal view, and is raised up by the strong arm of the servant of God a new creature in Jesus Christ:

"O happy day! Happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away!"

This is the institution in which we meet the blood of Jesus, and, so far as New Testament teaching is concerned, the *only* place where we *can* meet the blood of Jesus.

Conclusion: Christ died *for* our sins. All true Christians have died *to* sin. And the unbelieving and disobedient will die *in* sin. For it is a fact, sad but nevertheless true, that even though the sins of the world were thus borne by our Lord, and their death-penalty paid in full, God Himself does not—and may we say reverently, cannot—*force* any man to accept this Supreme Sacrifice in his behalf. Those who reject Christ as their Savior, who refuse to accept the free gift of God's love made possible through Calvary, place themselves beyond the reach of God's redeeming power. They must suffer the "second death," not because

they are sinners—for all men are sinners—but because they will not accept the only avenue of escape from the penalty of their sins. God extends to you at this time the Gift of His immeasurable love. But if you will not accept the gift, the fault is your own and you must expect to suffer the consequences. If you persist in rejecting the blood of the covenant, you need not expect to enjoy the blessings of the covenant.

The spirit of the Cross is the spirit of the Christian life.

I recall reading the story of a man who dreamed that he saw three men kneeling at the foot of the Cross. One looked up at the face of the suffering Savior, and exclaimed: "Lord, may it be my part to *prevent* Thy crucifixion!" And he saw a tear trickling down the face of the Crucified One. The other said, "Lord, may it be my part to *ease* Thy crucifixion!" And immediately a frown appeared upon the thorn-pierced brow. The third man, with eyes aglow, cried: "Lord, may it be my part to *share* Thy crucifixion!" And he looked up—and behold! there was a smile on the face of Jesus!

My sinner friend, this is what you must do—you must share His crucifixion. You must be crucified unto the world! You must be willing to take up His cross and bear it! You must turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. Then you must literally die to sin and arise to walk, cleansed by the blood of the covenant, a new creature in Jesus Christ. Will you not come now, while we sing?

XVIII.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings

Scripture Reading.—Phil. 3: 1-16.

Text.—"that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death." Phil 3: 10.

THE PROBLEM of suffering is one of the mysteries of life. Examples: the mother suffering at the bedside of her sick child, the father suffering to provide for his family, friend suffering for friend, etc. Suffering the very crown of human experience.

But how could an all-powerful God suffer? The mysteries of revealed religion: the triune personality of God, the Incarnation, the Atonement, etc. If the theist has his unanswered problems, the atheist has a thousand times as many. The convictions, attitudes and experiences of life are largely matters of faith.

God's suffering is sympathetic. To "sympathize" means to "suffer with." God has always suffered with His people, in their needs, aspirations, trials and backslidings.

1. *The Old Testament teems with cases of God's suffering with His ancient people*, in their punishment, captivity, and desolation. He was long-suffering in the days of Noah (1 Pet. 3: 20). Even towards the heathen He had compassion, as evidenced by the story of Jonah and the Ninevites. The broken-hearted Hosea, yearning for his faithless bride, an analogy of God's yearning for His faithless people, in olden times. "When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Always, through some chosen messenger, God was saying to Israel: "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

2. *The climax of God's suffering was attained through the miracle of the Incarnation.*

(1) His lowly birth a harbinger of the bitter days ahead.

"No beautiful chamber, no soft cradle-bed,
No place but a manger, no-where for His head."

Remember that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5: 19).

(2) His public life was one of compassion and suffering.

"O, ye of little faith!" "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often . . . but ye would not!" Gethsemane and its bitter "cup" (cf. 1 Pet. 2: 24).

(3) The suffering of Jesus was as great a problem to His apostles as it is to us (Matt. 16: 21-28, Luke 24: 45-47, Acts 3: 18, 26: 23, 1 Pet. 1: 11, 3: 18).

(4) The *Epistle to the Hebrews* presents as one of its fundamental themes that Jesus was qualified to act as our High Priest by His having been made "perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2: 17-18, 5: 8, 13: 12, etc.).

(5) The climax of His suffering was reached in the Garden and on the Cross. The Atonement is the *concrete expression* of God's suffering. If we reject the Atonement, we reject the whole moral character of God.

3. *The Incarnation is inseparably connected with the Atonement.* He lived as God, and He died as God, because He *was* God in the flesh (John 1: 14, Matt. 1: 23).

"A German scholar once indulging his fine scorn for the personality of Jesus, whom he considered a very ordinary man, said that the fame of Jesus would have never outlived His own generation if it had not been for the peculiarly tragic death which He suffered and which lifted His life out of the ordinary. Another German theologian responded by saying that 'It was not the *death* of Christ, but the *death of Christ*' that furnished the mystery of the ages and the source of Christianity's perennial power. He pointed out that many other famous men had died a martyr's death for the truth, as, for example, Socrates. Yet none of these had stirred the veneration of the world. It was not the mere fact of a great man dying a tragic death, but the fact that it was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died on the Cross, which gave Christianity its thrilling and powerful message of salvation. It was not the mere fact of a death, but who it was that died" (R. C. Foster, *Christian Standard*, Jan. 19, 1924).

4. *God is still suffering with us.* He suffered on the Cross once for all to make atonement for the sins of the world, but He now suffers with us in our afflictions and is touched by the feeling of our infirmities. O blessed consolation! Should we, too, walk the *Via Dolorosa*, bending under the burdens of ill health or blasted fortune, or stand beside the casket weeping for our loved one who has passed into the valley of the shadow, He stands at our side even as He stood by the tomb of Lazarus. And how our neglect, our indifference, our callousness, our sins, bear down upon His

heart! What poignant suffering our sins must bring to our Savior! Thus do we crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shame!

5. *What a blessed experience to have fellowship with Him in suffering!* Only by such fellowship can we fully prepare ourselves for the enjoyment of those "mansions" and "crowns" reserved in heaven for us (1 Cor. 2: 9, John 14: 1-3, Rev. 2: 10). Suffering refines the heart and puts the soul "in tune with the Infinite." John, in his apocalypse, saw an innumerable host "of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands;" and one of the elders said to him, "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7: 8-17). Not until we suffer with Him can we understand something of the immeasurableness and intensity of His great love (John 3: 16).

"Does Jesus care when my heart is pained
Too deeply for mirth or song?
As the burdens press and the cares distress,
And the way grows weary and long?

"Does Jesus care when my way is dark
With a nameless dread and fear?
As the daylight fades into deep night shades,
Does He care enough to be near?

"Does Jesus care when I've said, 'Good-by,'
To the dearest on earth to me?
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks—
Is it aught to Him—does He see?

"Oh yes, He cares—I know He cares;
His heart is touched with my grief;
When the days are weary, and the long nights dreary,
I know my Savior cares."

—Frank E. Graeff.

Conclusion: Sinner friend, God cares for you. Will you not come back from "the far country?" God has looked upon your downward plunge. God understands your disillusionment, your disgrace and your despair. He yearns for you to come back—"home." He is waiting to receive you with outstretched arms. Will you not come now?

XIX.

At the Cross

Scripture Reading.—Col. 1: 9-23.

Text.—"... having made peace through the blood of his cross..."
Col. 1: 20.

THE CROSS IS CENTRAL in redemption, in history, in worship, and in experience. The Cross is the meeting-place of opposites:

1. *Of midnight and noon* (three hours of sunlight, followed by three hours of darkness).

2. *Of love and hate.* Divine love as manifested in our Lord's supreme sacrifice; and human hate as manifested by the ecclesiastical leaders of Jewry.

3. *Of love and justice.* Love of God for man as manifested by the Supreme Gift (John 3: 16); and justice as exemplified in the costliness of the offering which paid the penalty of sin.

4. *Of innocence and sinfulness.* Christ died, "the righteous for the unrighteous" (1 Pet. 3: 18).

5. *Of divine sacrifice, and human lust and greed.* Human lust as manifested by the thirst of the chief priests and scribes for the blood of their innocent Victim, and greed as manifested in the willingness of Judas to betray Him for thirty pieces of silver.

6. *Of good and evil.* Here transcendent Good and diabolical Evil engaged in a struggle unto the death.

"Because He lives and rules in the Spirit, the conspiracy of our Lord's enemies against Him failed; and failed the more because of its temporary success. The victory of evil was turned into defeat. Sin slew itself in slaying Him. The worst His murderers could do against Him was the best for Him, and for all mankind. They pulled down the Temple of His body, and He restored a millionfold all the intentions and achievements of His living Presence. He died unto sin once; He lives forever unto God, and death has no more dominion over Him" (S. Parkes Cadman, *Christian Herald*, Aug. 1, 1925).

7. *Of Law and Gospel.* His death abrogated the old covenant, and at the same time ratified the new (John 1: 17, Col. 2: 14, Luke 22: 20). (Cf. also Heb. 9: 23-28).

8. *Of life and death.*

Conclusion: (1) "The death was the explanation, the justification, and the crown of life. . . . The atonement is a mystery that has never been fully elucidated, and never can be. It belongs to the unfathomable truths of Christianity. But although we cannot understand the atonement, there is no reason why we may not avail ourselves of its saving power. It is not necessary to be a theologian in order to be saved" (John A. Patten, *Faces Through the Mist*, p. 190).

(2) "Whenever the heart is most kindled, it is by the thought of the well of God dug by the soldiers' spear, of the cross, the sponge, the vinegar, the nails, of the red wine of love that flowed when He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him; of the sweet and dreadful cry, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!' He was slain, and we slew Him. We can never make it up. The thorns of the thorn-crowned head pierced the heart, the fever of His death wakes the fever of our passion, till all the loves that once strayed abroad gather to a burning centre, and the fountain of our affections has but one channel, and that is He" (W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Seen and the Unseen*, p. 99).

"When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

"See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

—Isaac Watts.

XX.

God's Immeasurable Love

Scripture Reading.—John 3: 1-17.

Text.—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3: 16.

THIS IS WHAT is generally called "the golden text of the Bible." A text that grows broader and deeper with every meditation. Let us analyze it briefly:

1. "*For.*" What does the "for" mean here? It introduces the text. It explains *why* God gave His only begotten Son. There is a theory that pictures an outraged Deity standing over the helpless, fallen human race, ready to smite it with a blow. According to this theory, which originated among the theologians, when the blow was about to fall, Jesus stepped in, just in the nick of time, and the blow intended for man fell on Him. This theory outrages our God. The world has been under condemnation since man fell from his original state of innocence. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, because it was already under condemnation (John 3: 17). God sent His son into the world *that the world might be saved through Him*. God's love was thus manifested because man was in danger of perishing and becoming lost forever.

2. "*God.*" The Creator and Preserver of all things; in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning; who is essentially Spirit (John 4: 24); who is infinitely holy, just and good; who is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. Not an abstraction, not a mere principle, not an impersonal energy, but "our Father who art in heaven."

3. "*Loved.*" Man fell by transgression. Guilt superseded innocence. The angels who fell were bound in everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day (Jude 6). But man had been created in God's image, and God *loved* him too much to allow him to become lost forever. And the only way to overcome the rebellion in man's heart, caused by his own wicked works, was by a sublime demonstration of God's love for him. Such was the purpose of Calvary (Col. 1: 19-23).

4. "*The world.*" His love was manifested towards all men, through Jesus Christ. God gave His Son, and the Son gave His life, for the whole world without respect to race or color or condition of servitude. Man, however, must accept and use the Gift before it can be of any value to him. If he refuses to do this, he must remain under the curse of sin

and under the penalty of the law. Christ is the only way back to the Father's house (John 14: 6).

5. "So." This little adverb of degree is related to the remainder of the text. God loved the world so—i.e., so much that He gave, etc. *What is the measure of God's love?* Let the last sentence of the text answer this question:

(1) *The height of that love*: "that He gave his only begotten Son." It is as immeasurably high as heaven itself, whence the Word came to become flesh and dwell among us (John 1: 14, 17: 5). In order to qualify as our Redeemer and High Priest, He took not upon Himself the nature of angels, but the nature of the seed of Abraham (Phil. 2: 5-11; John 1: 1-14; Heb. 2: 14-17).

(2) *The breadth of it*: "that whosoever believeth in him." It is as immeasurably broad as all humanity. Whosoever will, may come. "Make disciples of all the nations," etc.

(3) *The depth of it*: "should not perish." It is as immeasurably deep as the grave into which our Lord went that He might redeem us from its bondage and corruption. He came forth from the grave, the conqueror of death and Hades (Rev. 1: 18). He is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11: 25). The grave no longer has any terrors for the saints who live and die in Him.

(4) *The length of it*: "but have eternal life." It is as immeasurably long as eternity itself. Immortality is the most wonderful of all the fruits of this divine manifestation of love (1 Cor. 15: 35-57).

Conclusion: Eph. 3: 14-19, "that ye may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. . . ."

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty . . .

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

—*Frederick W. Faber.*

XXI.

Vicarious Sacrifice

Scripture Reading.—John 15: 1-14.

Text.—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15: 13.

THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE OF ART is beauty; of music, harmony; of law, authority; of sin, selfishness; of religion, reconciliation; and of love, *sacrifice*. Vicarious sacrifice and service is the highest and noblest manifestation of love.

The idea that God would permit or accept the suffering of such a sinless person as Jesus, in order to relieve the sinner of the penalty of his sins, strikes some people as being out of harmony with the moral character of the Deity. However, ordinary observation discloses the fact that in every kingdom of life of which we have any knowledge, vicarious suffering is the essential principle of growth and progress. In this respect the *kingdom of nature* is governed by the same laws as the *kingdom of grace*.

1. Take the *plant world*, for instance. Here the decay of plant life enriches the soil, and out of this decay and death a more vigorous and beautiful life is produced. The death of the lower order prepares the way for the development of the higher. The seed must die, in order to germinate and reproduce its kind; and the product of the seed's germinal life is much nobler than the seed itself. In all annual plants, the germs of new plants grow out of the death of the old; and in perennial plants and trees, this process goes on continually. It is a law of nature that life in some mysterious way springs out of death. What is this but vicarious sacrifice?

2. The same is true in the *brute kingdom*. Here we find the substance and vital force of the mother exhausted in producing and nurturing life in her offspring. The mother imparts her very own life in bearing and rearing her young. In the brute creation, from the lowest order to the highest, the protective and sacrificial instincts are deeply and ineradicably embedded. Parents spend themselves and die in defense of their young; the strong give themselves to support the weak. This trait is instinctive. It is so striking that Jesus makes use of the willingness of the hen to sacrifice in order that she may nurture her brood, as an analogy of His own willingness to spend and be spent for the ungrateful city of His love (Matt. 23: 37-39).

3. Consider the dominance of this principle in the *realm of personality*. Here the mother literally gives her substance and life in the reproduction and care of her children. The same is true of the father, in a lesser degree perhaps, or at least in a different way. Here we find that voluntary sacrifice and suffering is the essential principle in all human progress from lower to higher ideals. No great advance has ever been made in civilization without the shedding of precious blood.

4. If vicarious sacrifice is dominant in the history and life of the human race, surely it must be an essential element *in the nature and work of the Deity*. "Why honor all vicarious service and suffering among men," asks David Lipscomb, "as true and ennobling heroism, and then deny to Jesus Christ, the Author of this principle in man, the highest and truest and noblest heroism of the universe?" Our God is not only a God of power and glory, but a God of benevolence and compassion as well. His everlasting power and divinity are manifested in nature, but His divine love and compassion could have been revealed only in a world of lost sinners. The entire scheme of redemption is quite rational.

Conclusion: Christ came and died for one fundamental purpose, viz., *to awaken love for God in every human heart*. It was when His hands were pierced that He gripped humanity. It was when they crucified Him that they enthroned Him. As William Watson has written:

"The Caesars and the Alexanders pass,
But he who drank the hemlock,
He who drank the cup more dread on Calvary's hill—
These are the servants and the conquerors of all this mighty world."

The spirit of self-seeking breeds all the problems and inequalities of this present evil world, and the spirit of Christ our Savior, the spirit of self-giving, will remove them.

A great capacity for vicarious suffering is the supreme qualification for a truly successful spiritual life. "If any man come after me . . . let him take up his cross," etc.

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain, ✓
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
And whoso suffers most has most to give."

"He was under no obligation to pay 'the debt of nature'—that is, to die. It is appointed unto men once to die—unto men, but not unto Jesus. He had power to lay down His life and to take it up again. On the Mount of Transfiguration He

was beyond the deadline of mortality, and might have abandoned the sinning and suffering world to its fate (as Peter and James and John seemed ready to do), but even then He was telling Moses and Elijah that He was going back to Jerusalem to be crucified. He chose to die that He might come into touch with dying men. Here again, is a manifestation of gracious condescension. No man could take His life from Him, whether Jewish high priest or Roman governor. He would cross the boundary between mortality and immortality at will. He might go by the glory gateway of Transfiguration, or by the dark, shameful, painful one of crucifixion. For man's sake, he chose the latter, and humbled Himself unto death, yea, even the death of the cross" (B. J. Radford, *Christian Standard*, Jan. 15, 1916).

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

XXII.

The Preaching of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—1 Cor. 1: 18-31.

Text.—"But we preach Christ crucified. . . ." 1 Cor. 1: 23.

TO PREACH "CHRIST CRUCIFIED" is to preach that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3). Preaching "Christ crucified," preaching the Cross, and preaching the gospel, are expressions equivalent to one and the same thing.

In our text the Apostle Paul alludes to three types of mind, and describes their respective reactions to the preaching of "Christ crucified."

1. *To the Jews*, he says, this preaching of the Cross was a "stumbling-block."

"The Jew" here is a term which represents the dogmatic, legalistic type of mentality, which always seeks after a "sign," and which measures all religious experience and exercise in terms of strict conformity to prescribed law and ritual. Naturally, to such, the preaching of the Cross with its philosophy and pattern of sacrificial love, is a stumbling-block. (The *Authorized Version* gives it, "offense"). It was so in Jesus' day, in Paul's day; and continues to be so in our day. After eighteen centuries of Christian testimony, the Jew is still blinded by the ancient veil of the Mosaic Law (2 Cor. 3: 12-16).

2. *To the Greeks*, this preaching of the Cross was "foolishness."

The "Greeks" (Gentiles) represents the speculative, philosophical type of mind, that takes special pride in its "broadness" (which is often mere flatness and insipidity); that is continually wandering around in the realm of the relative, never arriving at any definite conviction or conclusion. Such were the Athenian philosophers before whom Paul delivered his discourse on Mars Hill (Acts 17); and such were the semi-skeptics who sprang up in the church at Corinth after the Apostle had gone on to Ephesus, to whom he addressed a major portion of his first *Epistle to the Corinthians*. Unfortunately this "Greek" spirit was allowed to come into the church in the post-apostolic era. The consequence of this so-called "Scholasticism" was a mass of medieval theology, of a technical and speculative nature, from the baneful effects of which Christendom has never emerged and probably never will.

3. But "*unto them that are called*," this preaching of the Cross was effective unto salvation.

Finally, there is the spiritual type of mind (not necessarily "mystical," but reverently practical), as represented by those primitive Christians, to whom the preaching of the Cross was "the power of God" and "the wisdom of God." They were able to discern in it the authority, wisdom and love of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ; hence to them it became the "power of God unto salvation," as it is indeed "*to every one that believeth*" (Rom. 1: 16-17). In such good soil as this, the seed of the kingdom may always be expected to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (Luke 8: 9-15; Gal. 5: 22-24).

Conclusion: 1. The challenge of the Cross is a challenge (and call) to faithful Christian service.

"I said: 'Let me walk in the fields.'
He said: 'No, walk in the town.'
I said: 'There are no flowers there.'
He said: 'No flowers, but a crown.'

"I said: 'But the skies are black,
There is nothing but noise and din.'
And He wept as He sent me back;
'There is more,' He said, 'There is sin.'

"I said: 'But the air is thick,
And the fogs are veiling the sun.'
He answered: 'Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone.'

"I said: 'I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say.'
He answered: 'Choose to-night,
If I am to miss you or they.'

"I pleaded for time to be given.
He said: 'Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem so hard in heaven
To have followed the steps of your Guide.'

"I cast one look at the fields,
Then set my face to the town.
He said: 'My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?'

"Then into His hand went mine,
And into my heart came He;
And I walk in a light divine,
The path I had feared to see."

—George MacDonald.

2. *The preaching of the Cross is the one thing most needed* in this shallow, superficial, jazzy, materialistic age through which we are now passing.

(1) "The offense of Christianity centres in the Cross. To preach that Cross, not merely as a model of selfish love and sacrifice which we can follow though at a distance, but as a great unique, objective fact, a settled axiom of the spiritual world which must re-make us before we can speak of 're-capitulating' it, is to preach the great 'offense.' To lift up the Cross once more as the supreme revelation of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; as the redeeming Act of God giving Himself in love that risks all; as the power that has broken down and is breaking down all barriers of race, class and sex, that has destroyed and is destroying the present world-order, is to confront men with something that cuts deep into their most cherished interests and aims" (E. Herman, *Christianity and the New Age*).

(2) "The Modernists reject the theory of the Atonement—some of them denounce it as a 'bloody gospel,' while others simply say, as one of the leading Modernists did, 'The blood upon the cross is too old to be of any aid to me.' Here, too, their attitude is logical. They deny the fall of man—'How, then,' they ask, 'can man need a Savior to restore him?' All the Modernists are evolutionists and their hypothesis of creation gives man a brute ancestry and makes him the apex of a gradual development extending over millions of years. This hypothesis contains no place for, and no need of, a plan of salvation. It is only a step from this philosophy to the philosophy of the atheist who considers man 'a bundle of tendencies inherited from the lower animals,' and regards sin as nothing more serious than a disease that should be treated rather than punished. One of the gravest objections to the doctrine of the Modernists is that it ignores sin in the sense that the Bible describes sin. Modernists ignore the *cause* of sin, the *effects* of sin, and the *remedy* for sin. They worship the intellect and overlook the heart 'out of which are the issues of life'" (W. J. Bryan, *The New Reformation*, June, 1925).

(3) "Popular preachers today present the death of Jesus Christ as the supreme example of obedience and submission to the will of God, as the sublime illustration of the universal principle of vicarious suffering, or as the mighty appeal to the moral nature of men. But hell shakes with infernal laughter when it hears the Cross of Christ preached to sinners in this way. Satan need not trouble himself at all, for his 'angels of light' who thus preach Christ do his work to his complete satisfaction. But when we turn to the New Testament we discover that Christ died in God's great provision of justice and mercy, that He might remain just and yet be the Justifier of them that believe on Jesus. The awful transaction on Calvary has its effect upon both God and man, making it right and possible for God to forgive sin and yet to justify the sinner.

On the Cross, Christ took the sinner's place, drank the sinner's cup, felt the sinner's stripes, and was bruised for the sinner's transgressions. It is when you come to preach Christ as the atonement, as the divine Sin-bearer, as the One who was made sin on our behalf, that you approach the glory and power of the Christian religion. Wherever the Gospel is preached with the great doctrine of expiation and atonement left out, there the offense of the Cross has ceased. That is the one doctrine in Christianity which the world scorns, and which the gates of hell fear.

"The appalling thing is that in so many of our churches the doctrine of the Cross is preached with the offense left out. And shall the offense of the Cross cease? It was the doctrine of the Cross, Christ offered up for sinners, that the apostles declared 'first of all.' It was that doctrine which established the Church in the pagan world and has kept it secure through the storms of the ages. Is the Church now to forsake its first love and preach to a lost and fallen humanity the merits and virtues of human nature, in the place of the atoning and saving work of Christ as the only Redeemer from sin? Where the offense of the Cross has ceased, there the Gospel has ceased and the Church has vanished. So we might have great cathedrals, and eloquent human speech, and singing which would cause Gabriel himself to hang his head in silence, and the hum and rumor of classes and organizations, and much stained glass, and great ecclesiastical conventions, and great men's classes requiring special trains to transport them—and with it all, no offense of the Cross, no Gospel! One of the most alarming tendencies of the day in Christian circles is the tendency to dilute and tone down the Gospel to suit the prejudice and unbelief of the age in which we live. I recall the terrible praise bestowed upon a popular preacher in my university days, how one of the men said of him, 'I like his preaching—he is not always preaching the Gospel at you.' Sad, unspeakably sad, that eulogy! . . . God save the Church from such weakness and apostasy! God save our churches from becoming lighthouses whose light has been quenched, or, what is even worse, lighthouses which flash and glow with false lights to deceive and lure to destruction the pilgrims on life's stormy sea! The wound in the Savior's side, made by the thrust of the spear of the world's rejection and scorn, is wide enough as it is. Let not the Church make it wider with its own recreant thrust!" (Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney, *The New Reformation*, June, 1925).

J. J. P.

XXIII.

Sin and Its Cure

Scripture Reading.—1 John 1: 1-10.

Text.—"and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
1 John 1: 7.

SIN IS LAWLESSNESS

(1 John 3: 4). The essential principle of sin is *selfishness*. There never was a sin committed that was not the choice of self above God.

Various remedies for sin have been proposed by philosophers and reformers. E.g., education, mental healing, psycho-analysis, "salvation by character," "social regeneration," etc. The deluded followers of Mrs. Eddy solve the problem of sin by pronouncing it an "illusion of the mortal mind"—an explanation which doesn't explain anything.

The fact remains *that there is only one remedy for sin—the blood of Jesus Christ*. And there is only one method of presenting and applying this remedy, viz., the preaching of the gospel for the obedience of faith (1 Cor. 1: 21).

1. *Faith* takes away the *love* of sin, by focusing the soul, its affections and aspirations, upon the One Altogether Lovely (John 14: 1; Acts 16; 31; Heb. 11: 6; Acts 15: 9 and 26: 18; Gal. 2: 20, etc.).

2. *Repentance* does away with the *practice* of sin (Luke 15: 18-19; 2 Cor. 7: 10; Rom. 2: 4, etc.).

3. *Baptism* transfers the believing penitent out of a state of alienation into a *saved state*, or a state of reconciliation with God. This formal transfer is indicated by the formula, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28: 19; Acts 2: 38). Baptism marks the closing of the old chapter, and the beginning of the new.

"Spiritually baptism is into Christ (Rom. 6: 3), just as the physical act is into the water. Thus we become immersed, submerged or hidden in Him, and put on Him (Rom. 6: 3). While we wear Him, the world looking at us will see, not us, but Christ. The thinner our garment the greater will be the prominence of our sinful selves. Spiritually, too, baptism is a death (Rom. 6: 8), not of the body, nor of the mind or faculties, *but of a life of sin*. Following this death is a burial (Rom. 6: 8), closing the chapter of our past carnal life just as completely as the burial of the body closes the chapter of our mortal life. In Christ, the fruitful, is a planting (Rom. 6: 5), of the seed of a new life (Rom. 6: 4), which is ours after

having been born again (John 3: 5), begotten of the Spirit of God. Whereas we were children of wrath, we are now sons of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, having risen with Him (Col. 2: 12), through the faith of the operation of God. Baptism physically is a washing of the body, but spiritually it is a complete cleansing from sin (Tit. 3: 5)" (Cecil J. Snow, *The Australian Christian*).

4. *Pardon* removes the *guilt* of sin. A pardon is always issued at the seat of authority. Divine pardon is not something done *in us*, but something done *in heaven for us*. In its legal sense, it is called *justification* (Rom. 5: 1; Gal. 3: 26-27; Rom. 4: 25, 5: 18).

5. *Resurrection*, followed by glorification, will eradicate the *consequences* of sin, the chief of which is death (1 Cor. 15: 20-23; Rom. 8: 11; Phil. 3: 20-21).

Conclusion: Redemption will not be completed until God's saints are clothed in glory and honor and immortality; redeemed in body, soul, and spirit. Then, and not until then, will sin be eradicated, with respect to both its guilt and its consequences (Rev. 21: 1-4).

"In the land of fadeless day,
Lies the 'city four-square,'
It shall never pass away,
And there is 'no night there.'
God shall 'wipe away all tears';
There's no death, no pain, nor fears;
And they count not time by years,
For there is 'no night there.'"

XXIV.

The Memorial of the Cross

Scripture Reading.—1 Cor. 11: 23-34.

Text.—"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. 11: 26.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CROSS is indicated by the fact that it has been made central not only in the Christian message, but in Christian worship as well. Our Lord Himself, just before His trial and crucifixion, saw fit to ordain a memorial institution to be kept by His church throughout the entire Christian era, in commemoration of His death and suffering. This "feast of remembrance" occupies the place of prominence in every local assembly of the saints, and is the very heart and center of all Christian worship. We shall now briefly summarize the details of New Testament teaching with regard to this memorial of the Cross and its observance, as follows:

1. *Its Author.* Christ, the Founder and Head of the church, ordained it (Matt. 26: 26-28); "on the night of his betrayal" (1 Cor. 11: 23).

2. *Its Name.* It has four scriptural names: (1) "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2: 42, 20: 7); (2) "the table of the Lord" (1 Cor. 10: 21); (3) "the communion of the body and of the blood of Christ" (1 Cor. 10: 16); and (4) "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11: 20).

3. *Its Elements.* The elements appointed by our Lord as appropriate emblems of His suffering, were: (1) an unleavened loaf (bread), (Mark 14: 12, 22, and 1 Cor. 5: 8); and (2) "the fruit of the vine" (the cup), (Luke 22: 18, 20). The bread symbolizes His body which was offered as a propitiation for sin; the fruit of the vine symbolizes His blood which was shed for the remission of our sins. The cup is an appropriate emblem of the cup of suffering which He drank for us on the Cross.

4. *Circumstances of its origin.* (1) The place: in Jerusalem, in "a large upper room," a guest-chamber perhaps (Mark 14: 13-16). (2) The time: "in the night in which he was betrayed" (1 Cor. 11: 23). (3) The setting: The first observance of the Supper followed the eating of the Passover. This was significant: the old covenant with "its shadows of good things to come," was "nigh unto vanishing away" (Heb. 10: 1, 8: 13).

5. *Its Nature:* (1) It was never designed to be an elaborate public ceremonial. (2) Nor is there any hint of religious caste in the circumstances of its origin. (3) Nor is there any hint of mysticism, sacerdotalism, or sacramentalism, or any of the other

"isms" coined by theology. (4) It was obviously intended to be a *simple memorial feast*, at which all Christians meet on the same democratic level, and essentially spiritual in its design. These facts are obvious from the circumstances of its origin and from the language of the Master in ordaining it.

6. *Its Perpetuity*. It was ordained to be observed by the church throughout the entire Christian era: "till he comes again."

7. *Its Observance*. (1) *Frequency*: it was observed by the early disciples on "the first day of the week," the Lord's Day (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 14: 37, 16: 1-2; Rev. 1: 10). This precedent was established by the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and is therefore authoritative (John 16: 13, 20: 21-23; 1 Cor. 14: 37). (2) The *Host* is the Lord Himself, our Elder Brother. It is not the church's Table, but the *Lord's Table*. "My table" (Luke 22: 29-30). As it is the Lord's Table, it is not our privilege to invite or exclude any believer who would participate in the Feast. (3) The *Guests*. The gospel is for the whole world, but the Table is for the flock, for believers, for members of the body of Christ. "They continued stedfastly in . . . the breaking of bread" (Acts 2: 42)—who were the "they?" They who have received the word and obeyed it (v. 41). Baptism is at the threshold of the church—the Supper is in the house, in the guest-chamber. And who are the guests? Those who have accepted the terms of the invitation. (4) *Manner of observance*: (a) It should be observed with becoming solemnity. (b) It should be observed in a spirit of thankfulness. (c) It should be observed without either haste or tediousness. (d) It should be observed with accompanying meditation, introspection and prayer.

8. *Its significance and design*.

(1) It is a *memorial service*: a memorial of the Cross, of the suffering and death of Jesus on the Cross. It reminds us of what He has done for us; of the blessings that come to us through His death; and of our constant dependence upon Him. He is our daily portion, our spiritual food, our bread and water of life (John 4: 14, 6: 35, 6: 53-58).

(2) It is a *communion service*, i.e., a personal and individual communion of each believer with the Lord. "Let a man prove himself" (1 Cor. 11: 28).

(3) It is a *reconsecration service* (Rom. 12: 1-2). It is in reality a renewal of the covenant that was entered into with the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, in primary obedience. Hence the fruit of the vine is symbolic of "the blood of the covenant" (Luke 22: 20; Heb. 10: 29).

(4) It is a *fellowship service*: "a communion" (i.e., a sharing together, with all the saints) "of the body and of the blood of Christ" (1 Cor. 10: 16-17). While it is a personal communion of each and every believer with the Lord, yet it is also a service in which all the saints have fellowship with one another in remembering Jesus Christ. The *one loaf* is a mute but eloquent witness to the *oneness* of the body of Christ.

(5) It is a *proclamation* service. "Ye proclaim the Lord's death" (1 Cor. 11: 26). In keeping it we testify to our belief that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15: 3).

(6) It is a *prophetic* service. "Ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." It is like a guide-post with two arms: one pointing back to our Lord's death on the Cross, the other pointing forward to His second coming.

(7) The church is the "household of the faith" (Gal. 6: 10). The church is God's family. God is our Father, Jesus Christ our Elder Brother. Here at the assembly of the saints, at the public worship of the church, the members of the family are "at home." The Father and Elder Brother are here with them "in the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 22). Here we gather around the Family Table and partake of the Family Meal, which is essentially spiritual; and as we gather around this Table, we sing:

"Blest be the tie that binds,
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

Conclusion: All the essential elements of Christian worship are embodied in this memorial of the Cross and its observance, viz., commemoration, communion, fellowship, prayer, proclamation, thanksgiving, meditation, inspiration and prophecy. How important, then, that we neglect not "our own assembling together!" (Heb. 10: 25.)

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